Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

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Editorial Comments

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Marxism and the Family

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The Importance of People as Compared with Machines

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The Crisis of Man and Environment
(Concluding Contribution)

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Discussion

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Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain

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MARXISM TODAY

THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

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Editorial Comments

ON 26 October, Claude Poperen, reported for the Political Bureau of the French Communist Party on the progress of unity on the left to a meeting of the Central Committee. "The dominant feature of the present political situation in France", he said, "is that, as the crisis develops in every field, incontestably it is the movement around the Joint Programme of the Communists, Socialists and Radical Left which is winning growing support from democrats and people of every social category desiring change".

In more than two-thirds of the French Departments, he reported, agreements had been made between the Communist and Socialist Parties, often extended to the Left Radicals, either on a departmental or local level or in factories and concerns. A whole number of joint meetings had been held, joint press conferences organised, joint discussions with the local trade union organisations arranged and joint statements issued. More and more organisations of the Left Radicals locally were coming out in support of the Programme.

The meeting of 19 October between the Communist and Socialist Parties and the Left Radicals had created, in the opinion of Claude Poperen, new conditions for developing a mass movement for and around the Joint Programme. The National Liaison Committee had agreed at this meeting:

1. To put forward joint proposals in Parliament for legislation that would further aspects of the Programme.
2. To organise joint actions on questions of a national and international character related to the Programme, especially questions of the immediate demands of the working people, and of solidarity with the people of Indochina and Chile.
3. The organisation of a joint national demonstration at Paris.

George Marchais, speaking in the course of the discussion, stressed in particular that the Programme was not only an agreed document but a call for common action:

> "When we speak of the existence of the Joint Programme we see two aspects that are inextricably interrelated. On the one hand *the contents of the Joint Programme*, a programme giving priority to the well-being of the mass of the people and forseeing to this effect economic and social transformations that will threaten the rule of monopoly capital. On the other, the fact that to ensure the victory of the Programme, *the opposition has united* and that, step by step but surely, their unity is consolidating, extending, growing stronger".

This fact, declared Marchais, is "the determining factor of the present political situation in France".

RIGHT-WING REFORMISM

But the achievements of left unity in France do not at all negate the need for a constant and scientific critique of reformist social-democratic, ideology, nor examination of the question why right-wing reformism has gained and maintained so great an influence on the working class in many advanced capitalist countries.

An extensive collective Soviet study has just been published in German translation precisely on this question[1]. It is a collection of fourteen essays covering, amongst other subjects, "The Philosophical Basis of Reformist Ideology", "The Reformist Myth of the Transformation of Capitalism", "The Reformist Theory of Mixed Economy", "Reformist View of Classes and Class Struggle", "Communists and Social-Democrats". "Social-Democratism" is defined as "the ideology and policy of the right-wing leaders of Social Democracy", as "one of the varieties of bourgeois ideology".

The last essay in this collective study, which sets out to analyse the basis for the influence of reformism on the masses, contains some interesting material on the Socialist International in the last two decades.

The International was re-established in 1951. It consisted (at time of writing of the book) of 38 real parties (with some insignificant groups) with a total membership of 15,200,000 and a voting strength (as at April 1966) of 72,700,000. The largest single party

[1] *Ideologie des Sozialdemokratismus in der Gegenwart*, Verlag Marxistische Blätter, Frankfurt am Main, German Federal Republic, 1972 (*Contemporary Ideology of Social-Democratism*).

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affiliated is the British Labour Party (with a membership of 6,284,253 reported at its 1972 Conference).

It is mainly European in composition, with seven parties in Middle Eastern and Asian countries, eight in America (two in North and six in South America), weakest of all in Africa, with only three affiliated parties.

The author discusses some of the reasons for the continued grip of right-wing reformism:

> "The class consciousness of the workers has lagged behind the stormy development of the modern revolutionary process. . . . The contradictory nature of the development of State Monopoly Capitalism is utilised by the Social Democratic parties to carry out policies which enable the workers to force concessions . . . from the ruling class from time to time. . . .
>
> "Social Democracy . . . directs itself to the trade union level of working class consciousness, adapts itself to this level in its practical work, helps to consolidate it and in this way reproduces, as it were, the basis for its own influence.
>
> "Social democracy does not ignore the struggle for particular objectives which can be won within the framework of capitalism. . . . Manoeuvering between the basic interests of the monopolies and those of the workers, the Social Democratic parties have played their part in securing a series of useful reforms for the working masses, thus increasing the appeal of the Social Democratic parties.
>
> "Tradition also plays its part. . . ." "Most of their members honestly believe that the best way to fight for peace, democracy and socialism is within the ranks of the Social Democratic parties".

CONFLICTING TRENDS

He stresses again and again that the situation within the Socialist International and the various Social Democratic Parties is *not* stable, that there is a continuous struggle between left and right, a "sharpening differentiation".

The growth of the left within the Socialist Parties has accelerated since the period when this Soviet study was completed (1966). There have been important advances, for instance in Italy where, after many hesitations, the Socialist Party has again moved towards closer relations with the Italian Communists, in France with the elaboration of the "Joint Programme for Government" and, of course, in Chile, where the Socialist Party, a Marxist Party, has worked in the closest co-operation with the Communist Party and other sections of the Left, and set up the Government of Popular Unity.

Events show that through struggle, discussion, education, the extension of unity in every form, reformism, however strong at times and in certain places, *can* be defeated.

A BRITISH REFORMIST

No better example of right-wing reformism could be found that the recent booklet of Roy Jenkins[2].

The booklet is a collection of some of his recent speeches and articles, aimed to depict him as the thoughtful, sincere, humane, friend of the people.

Jenkins discusses many of the problems facing the ordinary people of this country and of the developing countries, poverty, unemployment, inflation, bad housing, miserable and alienating jobs, high prices, inequality, regional problems, the intolerable character of life in our cities, the problems of the old, the sick, the young. He underpins his argument with a powerful array of facts. The tone is full of concern and what the bourgeois press has gone to town in eulogising as "compassion" and "idealism". But what were Jenkins and the Labour Government doing about these questions from 1964-1970?

"You cannot get rid of poverty" he says "simply by soaking the rich. If the State took all the fortunes over £5,000 a year it would only add one per cent to the revenue". No . . . "the comfortable majority" have to make their contribution. "We have to persuade motor car workers in my constituency that they have an obligation to the low paid workers in the public sector" (p. 21). Thus the better off workers must pay for improvements for the poorer ones.

Heath has been saying exactly the same. His conception of socialism has nothing to do with "class" . . . "an appeal to class interest and class emotion is incompatible with the vision of a classless society which has always (sic) been one of the chief inspirations of Democratic Socialism". Ramsay MacDonald said as much in his day.

The *pièce de résistance* is the speech he delivered at Aachen in May this year on receipt of the Charlemagne Prize for "services rendered" in getting Britain into the Common Market. He speaks with admiration and respect of former prize winners—Robert Schumann, Jean Monnet, Konrad Adenauer and Winston Churchill.

He reveals, perhaps unwittingly here, his concept of the real purpose of the European Common Market. Because of the Vietnam war and the recovery and rise of other capitalist countries, the United States, he argues, no longer possesses the resources

[2] Roy Jenkins—"*What Matters Now*", Collins/Fontana 30p.

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for "unchallenged world leadership". Therefore "the new European Community must be prepared to fill at least part of the gap" (p. 78).

Post-war "American leadership" meant aggressive imperialism, cold war, neo-colonialism, anti-communism. Is this the gap that Britain, as part of the Common Market, is being asked to fill?

THE SPANISH PARTY CONGRESS

Mundo Obrero, central organ of the Communist Party of Spain has published a report of the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of Spain. Despite the obstacle of illegality, it writes—"this was the most representative Congress that our Party has held since the defeat of the Republic". Delegates from inside Spain formed a large majority.

There were four main items on the Congress agenda. Firstly, the Report of Santiago Carrillo on the situation and the development of Party policy in the discussion of which over 100 delegates took part.

Secondly, proposals outlined by Juan Gomez for the elaboration of a new Party Programme.

Thirdly, a Report by Ignacio Gallego on problems of organisation and changes in the rules; and finally, the election of the Central Committee.

The three Reports were unaminously accepted and a Commission set up to elaborate a draft programme to be submitted for discussion by all Party organisations and by broad progressive circles within the country.

A Central Committee of 114 members was elected, which, at its first meeting, re-elected Dolores Ibarruri as Chairman and Santiago Carillo as General Secretary. The political resolution adopted warned that the ultra group now in power is extending fascist measures of repression and hopes to perpetuate Francoism without Franco. Neo-centrism reflects a right-wing orientation trying to establish a political equilibrium by substituting the monarchy of Juan Carlos for the present regime.

There should be no illusions in "centrism" and its promises though it should not be forgotten that it can contribute to the weakening of the institutions of the dictatorship—"the opposition must not commit political suicide by accepting the imposition of 'Juancarlism'. The only acceptable compromise is one that will permit the establishment of a regime of real political liberties".

The "Pact for Freedom" represents an alternative policy. It is based on the struggle for a Provisional Government of broad coalition that will carry through an amnesty, grant political liberties without discrimination and organise the election of a Constituent Assembly which will decide on the political and social regime of the Spanish State.

"The passage from the fascist dictatorship to democracy", states the political resolution, "is impossible without a real political revolution". This will not necessarily take the form of a civil war or insurrection of the classic type. "The conjuncture of forces favourable to political changes and the isolation of the ultras can permit the political revolution to be carried through with less violence than that continuously employed by the regime to maintain itself in power".

The Party considers that in Spain "in order to ensure socialist democracy, to guarantee the authenticity of socialism and the advance to communism, it will be essential to respect the fundamental political liberties, the plurality of parties, liberty of information and of criticism, liberty of intellectual and artistic creation and not to impose any official philosophy".

The Congress also called for closer contacts between the Communist Parties of Western Europe "to work out joint strategies and develop new forms of working-class unity and action in face of the multinational firms, to advance the unity of the Left in Europe and to oppose the Europe of the monopolies with the alternative of a democratic and Socialist Europe."

While supporting the holding of a European security conference, the Congress declared itself against participation by the fascist Governments of Spain, Greece and Portugal.

The Congress approved the re-establishment of relations between the Spanish Communist Party and the Communist Party of China.

It confirmed the position of the leading organs of the Party in disapproving the entry into Czechoslovakia in August 1968 of troops of five Warsaw Pact countries, "a position whose correctness has been confirmed by recent events".

The Congress also confirmed the Party's policy "in favour of a new unity of the Communist Parties, unity in diversity, which would correspond to present conditions in the Communist movement, to the need for each Party to work out its own strategy independently".

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PROFIT FROM SLUMS

It is an axiom that every new Minister of Housing will produce a White Paper or Bill, or both, which is going to solve the housing problem. Henry Brook, Duncan Sandys, Keith Joseph, Richard Crossman, Anthony Greenwood, Julian Amery and others whose names we can no longer recall have produced their paper solutions. All have one thing in common—increasing reliance on the private sector. So they propose more home ownership, less council and new town building, take rents out of control, cut housing subsidies in favour of means tests for those unable to pay rocketing rents.

The more solutions they produce the worse the housing conditions of millions of working men, women and children. A glimpse of the appalling housing conditions in our towns and cities and the incalculable misery caused by them is given in "No Place Like Home—Britain's Housing Tragedy" by Frank Allaun (Andre Deutsch £2.50). The M.P. for Salford East who has been a constant campaigner in and out of Parliament for better housing, interviewed working class families in various parts of Britain. Some of the things they told him were:

> "The floorboard just gave way. The first thing we noticed the sideboard was leaning on one side. I whipped the carpet back and there was a filthy big hole. I picked up a piece of timber and it just crumbled in my hand. This was the first discovery of the water. It was about a foot deep."
>
> "According to the Medical Officer's report the rate for bronchitis in this district is three times as high as it is in the residential suburbs." "The ceiling is so dilapidated it keeps falling in. The cement comes in big chunks."
>
> "There used to be twenty-one living in this house with one lavatory for all of us to use. The kitchen is actually underneath the toilet. The sewage water from the toilet came down into the cooker where I cook." "I found mice in the children's bed."
>
> "The rats were terrible. I could show you woollen jumpers that have been ate away with them. The kids were feared to go to sleep at night because of them."

These are a few selections from the conditions described by the victims. These things exist in Britain in 1972 in a society which refuses to find the money to put an end to conditions which bring about misery, ill-health and stunted lives and can find scores of millions to construct glittering, lofty temples for the conduct of banking, insurance and other profitable business.

As long as profit can be made from slums they will continue. The shame of bad housing and overcrowding will be removed only through action to take the profit out of housing. The failure of past Labour Governments to treat housing as a social service has deprived millions of their supporters of the right to a decent home.

DEATH OF JACK DUNMAN

Jack Dunman's death on 31st October came as a shock and a grief to all who knew him. He was a frequent contributor to *Marxism Today* as to other communist and progressive publications. Although specially well-known as an expert on agricultural problems and editor of the *Country Standard*, Jack Dunman was very much an all-round man with interests in many fields. He had worked in the Co-operative movement and had a wide knowledge of trade-union problems. He was an enthusiastic musician with a particular interest in song and opera. He was knowledgeable on a whole range of literary and artistic matters, with a special interest in Kipling's work. And in recent years he had thrown himself with enthusiasm into the dialogue between Christians and Marxists. When he died he had been working on a book on socialist agriculture.

Readers of *Marxism Today* will, we are sure, wish to join the Editorial Board in paying tribute to a comrade of outstanding integrity and courage who will be greatly missed and greatly remembered.

ISRAELI COMMUNISTS IN CONGRESS

A full report in English of the 17th Congress of the Israeli Communist Party, held in June this year, has just been received.[3]

The Congress was attended by 394 delegates, who included both Jews and Arabs, representing 70 Branches, by fraternal delegates from 18 Communist Parties—from the CPSU, from all the other Socialist countries, from France, Italy, Spain, etc.—by representatives of Israeli non-Communist political organisations and prominent Israeli personalities, in greater numbers than ever before.

The *leitmotif* of the whole Congress, especially of the major opening report given by the Party Secretary, Meier Vilner, was the need to intensify the fight for peace in the Middle East, to end the occupation of the territories seized by Israel after the Six Day War in 1967, and to reach a settlement guaranteeing the genuine security of both

[3] Published by Foreign Relations Department, Communist Party of Israel, P.O. Box 26205, Tel-Aviv, Israel.

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Israeli and Arab states and the national rights of the Palestinian peoples.

The report gives chapter and verse proving irrefutably that the Six Day War and its aftermath have solved no problems for the Israeli people. On the contrary! While condemning terrorist responses to their plight by some Palestinian organisations, the report emphasises that the "regime of terror, enslavement and brutal exploitation" prevailing in the occupied territories, the miserable conditions of life imposed on the thousands of Palestinian refugees in the camps, the line-up of Israel with US imperialism, exacerbates tension and insecurity in the Middle East.

It is the root cause also of the continued militarisation of the Israeli economy (half of the Israeli Budget devoted to military expenditure), the staggering growth of the National Debt (increased from 3,000 million to 10,000 million Israeli lira since the war), the rip-roaring inflation (all-round increase in prices of 50 per cent since 1967) with the consequent lowering of real living standards for the workers, a most desperately acute housing shortage, increase in poverty and crime.

The workers and the trade unions have responded by fighting for better conditions, and there has been a marked increase in strikes. The Government has responded with repression and with a law prohibiting strikes.

The report provides startling revelations of the real origins of the Six Day War, confirming the Israeli Communist Party's estimation of it as "an aggressive war in the service of American imperialism and Zionist expansion."

Meier Vilner quotes a number of men who held leading positions in the Israeli Army in the 1967 war. These all derisively dismiss the idea consistently propagated that the Six Day War was a pre-emptive strike to prevent the "extermination" of Israel as a convenient myth, the basis for which was intemperate statements by some Arab leaders. They all declare that there was never any danger whatsoever of such extermination.

The Congress pledged itself to work with all its energies for the establishment of a United Israeli Peace Front, embracing all people and organisations willing to work for a just peace irrespective of their ideology or attitude to the Six Day War, the basis of this Peace Front to be a Seven Point Peace Plan based on the detailed implementation of the Security Council Resolutions of November 1967 (concerning withdrawal of Israeli troops to the pre-war frontiers), and of December 1971 (concerning the regime in Jerusalem).

The Plan aims to establish "respect for the rights of all the peoples and states in our region, including the people of Israel and the Palestinian Arab peoples; the rights (of the peoples) to live in peace within recognised and safe frontiers, free from the threat of the use of force."

This Congress will undoubtedly have resulted in a big advance in the struggle for a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

NEW BOOKS ON ECONOMICS

Deserving mention is the initiative of Penguin Books in making available (at the very reasonable price for nowadays of 60p and 70p respectively) two paperback collections of reprinted articles in their Education Series. The one is entitled *A Critique of Economic Theory*, edited by Prof. E. K. Hunt and Dr. Jesse Schwartz, the other *Socialist Economics*, edited by Prof. Alec Nove and Dr. D. M. Nuti. Whatever our preferences may be about the selection of articles on each topic, there can be little doubt that they will prove highly convenient as well as timely for all students of economics.

Perhaps the most general use and interest will attach to the former of these two conveniently pocket-size collections, which consists entirely of articles critical of orthodox bourgeois theory, largely from books or journals of the past ten years or so. It is prefaced by a strongly polemical article by one of the editors, starting with the declaration: "The following collection of essays brings together recent criticism of academic economics. This is part of the insurgence now sweeping the social sciences . . . which can only be understood, as an aspect of the general crisis of cold-war liberal ideology". Not uniformly persuasive to the not-already-converted, in its sweeping dismissals, this Introduction has the virtue of defending Marx against Samuelson and stating categorically that "conventional economics simply refuses to consider basic social problems, to which Marxism is addressed".

Among the reprinted articles are those by Profs. Meek and Joan Robinson, by Veblen, Mészaros, Dobb (one of 1937 and another of 1970), an excerpt from Marx's "Economic

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and Philosophical Manuscripts" (1844) about alienation, together with more technical (and in parts algebraic) pieces by Garegnani, Nuti, Medio and R. M. Goodwin. The fifth and concluding part is entitled "The Role of the State in Monopoly Capitalism". There are also useful references to further reading both at the end of the editors' Introduction, and at the end of the book; also an index.

The second is somewhat longer (over 500 pages), its tone is more "academic", and it will appeal mainly to those interested in the theoretical debate about a socialist economy and planning, and, in particular the recent discussions in the Soviet Union and elsewhere about economic reforms and about so-called "optimal planning" and pricing. This collection opens with select quotations from Marx, Lenin, Bukharin, and Preobrazhensky, and Stalin; which is followed by 20-page citations from two of the main participants in the economists' debate of the inter-war years about "economic calculation" under socialism, namely Von Mises on the one hand and Oskar Lange on the other.

Part 2, entitled "Accumulation and Growth", has longish extracts from articles or books by Dobb, Preobrazhensky, Donar and the Polish economists Brus and Laski. Part 3, on "Planning Techniques", contains two rather technical articles by Kalecki from Polish journals of the '60's; also a useful detailed account (by Montias) of the Soviet method of material balances, its problems and weaknesses. Part 4 is about the "Economic Reforms" of the '60's, and contains pieces by Liberman, Kosygin (from his well-known Report to the Central Committee in September 1965), also Novozhilov, together with more critical articles by each of the editors. Part 5 is on "Mathematical Techniques and Socialist Planning" and starts with the last work written by the late Oskar Lange, "The Computer and the Market". This is followed by three Russian excerpts (one by the famous Kantorovich) and one Hungarian (a lucid description by Kornai of a programming project commissioned by the National Planning Board in connection with the Five Year Plan of the later '60's, together with a concise and balanced assessment of the respective roles of centralised planning and market-mechanism). Part 6 consists of one article only: a favourable assessment, by Jack Gray, of the peculiarities of "The Chinese Model". At the end there is a 4-page guide to further reading and an index.

REFORM OF THE ECONOMIC MECHANISM IN HUNGARY

In 1969 the Publishing House of the Hungarian Academy of Science (Akademiai Kiado) published an English translation—*Reform of the Economic Mechanism in Hungary*—of an important study (edited by Istvan Friss) of the comprehensive economic reform introduced in Hungary on January 1, 1968.

By this reform the previous methods applied in the central planning and control of the national economy were radically transformed and a much wider autonomy given to the state-owned enterprises and other micro-economic units. The nine studies comprising this volume were written by economists who had taken part in the theoretical and practical elaboration of the new system of economic control and management.

Now the same publishers have issued a continuation of the first study in a second volume entitled *Reform of the Economic Mechanism in Hungary: Development 1968-1971*, an attempt to evaluate the experience of the first years of the reform and the preparation and launching of the fourth Five-year Plan (1971-1975). The new volume is edited by Otto Gado, and both volumes are available.[1] This second study surveys the economic regulations thus far applied and suggests means for their improvement. It contains analyses on questions of prices, wages, foreign trade, economic growth, product turnover, the food economy, and of the economic activity of the local councils.

"Economic control and management in Hungary", writes Dr. Matyas Timar, Deputy Prime Minister of Hungary, in a Foreword, "has relied for over three years on economic regulations, mostly indirect, instead of using detailed plan instructions". Whilst, in his opinion, this experience, does not suffice to enable their effectiveness and future to be fully assessed, he considers "with a fair degree of certainty that the system of economic regulations has stood its test".

We are very grateful to the Publishing House of the Hungarian Academy of Science for making available these and other valuable

[1] Istvan Friss (editor—*Reform of the Economic Mechanism in Hungary*, Budapest, reprinted 1971.
Otto Gado (Editor)—*Reform of the Economic Mechanism in Hungary: Development 1968-1971*, Budapest, 1972.
Both volumes published by Akademiai Kiado, Budapest, and obtainable through Central Books and Collets.

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Studies in English translation. Most of the chapters demand a fairly high level of economic understanding, but it is very important to have within reach a serious study of the methods of economic planning in a socialist country like Hungary, a study which is both authorative and exploratory, which poses problems as well as achievements, and is written by men and women who have not only developed theories but put them into practice.

DISCUSSIONS IN *MARXISM TODAY*

In this issue we publish the reply by Richard Hayter and John Cox to the discussion on *Crisis of Man and Environment*, having published all contributions received from our readers. This does not mean that we have brought to an end discussion on this vital problem. We are hoping to print soon an article on the subject by the French Marxist, Professor Labeyrie, and, in the course of 1973, to open a new discussion on *Economic Growth and the Environment*.

The discussion on *The Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain* was opened by Bert Pearce in the January 1971 issue of *Marxism Today*. It has continued for two years during which (counting this issue) we will have published over twenty discussion contributions.

The October meeting of our Editorial Board decided that we should close this discussion in this (December) issue and ask Bert Pearce to reply to the discussion early in 1973. We have tried to select for publication those contributions that raised the most interesting points and problems including the most critical, and also to allow for the to and fro of discussion. We apologise to those readers whose contributions we have not, for reasons of space, been able to publish, and have passed these to Bert Pearce so that he can take account in his reply of the points which they raised.

In this December issue we have printed Rosemary Small's article on *Marxism and the Family*, and have called for discussion contributions of up to 2,000 words on this subject. We are expecting an interesting and polemical discussion.

We have had several contributions on "*The Philosophy of Louis Althusser* following the articles of John Lewis, Grahame Lock and comrade Althusser himself. We have asked contributors to cut or keep their contributions to 2,000 words and hope to publish them over a period.

In mid-1973 we hope to publish an article by Jack Cohen on *The Nature of the Working Class* which is likely to lead to considerable discussion. We have already translated a Soviet article and articles from the Marxist theoretical press of the German Democratic Republic and the German Federal Republic which treat similar problems, and which we are hoping to publish at least in part.

SOME FUTURE ARTICLES

Last October an interesting seminar on economic questions was organised by the Economic Committee of the Communist Party. We are hoping to publish in early issues of 1973 the three main seminar reports —Ron Bellamy on *Recent Trends in British Economy*, Bob Rowthorn on *Unemployment* and Sam Aaronovitch on *Perspectives of Class Struggle and Alliances.*

We have a whole diverse range of forthcoming articles promised or in hand. Amongst them are Steve Sedley and Tony Agathangelou on *Pornography and the Law*; Martin Jacques on *Youth Culture*; Arnold Kettle on *Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution*; James Klugmann on *Classic British Reformism*; Dave Priscott on *The Communist Party and the Labour Party*; Bill Moore on *Parliament in History and Perspective*; Richard Gunn on *Marxist Dialectical Methodology*; Conrad Wood on *40th Anniversary of the Meerut Trial*; Mick Jenkins on *The Communist Party and the Fight for the Second Front*; Peter Wyncoll on *Early Nottingham Socialists*; Ted Seyd on *Eysenck; Race, Intelligence and Education*; A. L. Morton on *Utopian Thought of William Morris* (review article of a new book by Paul Meier); Martin Rabstein on *Monod's Chance and Necessity*; Anne Devine on *Modern Trends in Psychology*, etc. etc.

We have been receiving in recent years more and more contributions for publication in *Marxism Today* both in the form of original articles or discussions on articles published. We have to apologise to our readers that some of these, for lack of space, we have been unable to publish whilst others have been held over for considerable periods. And we are looking at the possibilities of increasing the size of the journal in order to include all that we would like to publish.

In the meantime we would appeal to readers to write to us (not for publication) giving their views and criticism of what has been published, and also their ideas for problems that we should treat and proposals for subjects of articles and possible authors.

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Marxism and the Family

Rosemary Small

In beginning any discussion on the family, it is important to recognise the fact that it is impossible to be totally unprejudiced. We have all been influenced in our thinking by our own experiences of family life: the childhood experience of the family is one of the strongest influences on each of us, and has in turn influenced the family life we have created for ourselves in adulthood. In addition to this, pre-conceptions have been instilled into us, both consciously and unconsciously, by the society in which we live.

It is, however, necessary to try and free ourselves as far as possible from our conditioning and to re-think some commonly-held assumptions about the family. I do not propose to deal with the commonest of these, that "man the hunter" has always held a superior position to "woman the child-bearer", since I assume that readers of this journal will be acquainted with Engels' *Origin of the Family* and his demolition of this, "one of the most absurd notions that have come down to us". However, I would like to deal briefly with two points arising from the periods of group and pairing marriage and the communistic household.

Matriarchy?

The first is an inference about power. Engels undoubtedly contributes to the view that the primitive household was in some sense matriarchal, with his phrases about "the supremacy of women", "the predominancy of women which generally obtained in primitive times". The inference has been drawn that women once held power over men in the same way that men later held power over women, which hardly seems feasible under the then economic structure.

The significant point for the status of women within the family is that the economy did not involve the dependence of the wife and children on the husband. Food was shared among a group of families; children, although they had "parents", belonged to the group as a whole; wives, if mistreated, did not have to suffer in silence for fear of economic privation. More importantly, the division of labour between the sexes was reciprocal: within the household, which was also the public community, men and women worked to provide the goods necessary for livelihood, and since in this type of society decisions are made by those who will carry them out, women were accorded decision-making powers commensurate with their contribution.

The question of matrilineal descent (Engels' "mother-right") may also have contributed to the idea of matriarchy, since it must have been an appallingly shocking idea to Victorian anthropologists. The significance this had on women's status in the family is difficult to assess, because, as Eleanor Burke Leacock points out in her introduction to the new Lawrence and Wishart edition of *Origin of the Family*, of the lack of attention that has been paid to the role of women in primitive societies, and also because of the misinterpretations arising from pre-conceptions (for example, that the mystique surrounding hunting is proof of male prestige, while the mystique surrounding childbirth is not proof of female prestige). There is a real need, she concludes, "for studies that reconstruct from extant materials on primitive communal and transitional societies something of women's functioning before the development of the male dominance that accompanied European economic and colonial exploitation".

The second point may be dealt with very briefly. For those who recognise the subjugation of women as a result of the development of private property ("the world-historic defeat of the female sex", in Engels' phrase) there may be a slight tendency to glamorise the situation in the primitive communal household. I have heard it said: "This is what we are aiming for under Communism". It may therefore be necessary to remind ourselves that we are dealing with the period of barbarism, when life was nasty, brutish and short.

Private Property and the Family

The domestication of animals and their use in trade and barter are significant not only in the political and economic sense, but are crucial to an understanding of the role and status of women within the family. With the growth of private property, the individual family became the basic economic unit of society, and within that family the women's work changed from community to private service. She and her children became dependent on an individual man, whose economic position established him as head of the family, enabling him to abolish mother-right and substitute patrilineal descent. Three comments here: the institution of monogamous marriage was a means through which property could be retained within the individual family, but in fact within all forms of class society, as Engels points out, it has been

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polygynous—female slaves, the "droit de seigneur", adultery or prostitution, are some of the ways in which men have eschewed monogamy while enjoining it on women.

Secondly, with the break-up of communal kin groups, the fact that the single family was the basic economic unit and also economically responsible for the maintenance of its members made it progressively more isolated and more vulnerable to social and economic pressures.

Thirdly, readers will no doubt have noticed that in the above sentence I have avoided using that current vogue-phrase, "the nuclear family". I have been unable to discover who coined this phrase, or why (does it perhaps have some association with the smaller families of the nuclear age?) but it is unscientific in the extreme. How can the family be a nucleus (something around which other things accumulate)? It is a molecule (a stable combination of simple atoms) and Engels himself uses this word to describe it: "modern society is a mass composed of these individual families as its molecules". I therefore propose to use the term "molecular family" and hope others may follow.

The Molecular Family

An interesting illustration of the down-grading of women during the development of the molecular family is provided with early Greek civilisation. George Thomson in *Aeschylus and Athens* points out that in early Attica, with a form of loose pairing marriage and children named after the mother, women's status was comparatively high, including voting rights in the popular assembly. With the development of property, adultery became a crime so serious that it was not murder to kill an adulterer caught in the act. The restrictions on the liberty of women in the interests of property are particularly obvious in the law of inheritance: sons inherited (on condition they maintained their sisters till marriage); if there were no sons, daughters could inherit only on condition they married the father's next-of-kin (usually their uncles) and the inheritance passed to their sons; if there were no children, the property reverted to the father's kin only, excluding the mother and her immediate kin completely. In a slave society, the attitude to women corresponded to that towards slaves, as may be judged from the remark of an Athenian orator: "We have courtesans for our pleasure, concubines for the daily needs of our bodies, and wives to keep house for us and bear us legitimate children".

Within class society there are usually two kinds of institution, one for the exploiters and one for the exploited, and so it has been with the institution of the family. Under feudalism, for example, marriage is a political act for the exploiters, an affair not decided by the two principal parties but by interests of land, money and power, and "family life" extends to rights over the bodies of the wives and daughters of the serfs and villeins.

The Family under Capitalism

The rise of the bourgeoisie is popularly supposed to have brought with it freedom in marriage. But, as Engels points out. economic factors and property relations in land, money, trade interests, etc., were the principal influences on marriage for the bourgeoisie. When we speak of the family under capitalism, it is important to clarify not only which kind of family we are speaking of (bourgeois or working-class) but also at which period, for during the period of capitalism itself the family has undergone significant changes.

Before the Industrial Revolution, the home was still the basic economic unit. The wives and daughters of agricultural labourers were employed in general farm work. In the cottage industries, spinning was the work of the women and children for their men who were hand-loom weavers. Wives and children were also employed in lace-making, straw-plaiting, needlework, button-making, hat-making, etc. Whatever family life may have been possible for the working-class in these circumstances was broken up by the impact of the Industrial Revolution. For the greater part of the 19th century in the industrial towns, about half the workers were women, and about half of those (i.e. one in four workers) adult married women.

What sort of family life was possible when women were working a minimum ten-hour day (and even after 1847, the Ten Hour Act was often evaded), where their young children were working with them, where their husbands were either working even longer hours or were away from home working in labour gangs building roads, railways and canals?

In the course of the Ten Hour debate the following account of a married women's day was given:

> "Half an hour to dress and suckle her infant and carry it out to nurse; one hour for household duties before leaving home; half an hour for travelling to the mill; twelve hours' actual labour; one and a half hours for meals; half an hour for returning home at night; one and a half hours for household duties. Leaving six and a half hours for recreation, seeing and visiting friends, and sleep. And in winter, half an hour extra time on the road to the mill and half an hour extra on the road home from the mill."

As Engels pointed out in *Condition of the Working Class in England*, when every member of the family works, the individual worker can get on with proportionately less, and the bourgeoisie took the opportunity to make profitable the labour of women and children through machine-work. "Hence the usual wages form an average according to which a

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fully employed family gets on pretty well, and one which embraces few members able to work, pretty badly." Not very much different to the situation today!

Break-up of the Family

He goes on to point to the break-up of the family under capitalism, with both wife and husband working a 12-13 hour day and the children "growing up like wild weeds", put out to nurse for a shilling or eighteen pence a week and dying like flies from accidents or neglect. Marx also in *Capital* points to the terribly high mortality of working-class children in the first years of life as "mainly due to the employment of mothers away from their homes" and the consequent doping, malnutrition, starving or poisoning of children. Labour-gang work was not confined to men: an investigation of agricultural districts along the East coast of Britain (where infant mortality was, surprisingly, equal to that of the worst factory districts) showed that married women were employed in gangs, hired out to farmers by contractors, working many miles from their own villages, homes and children.

The criticisms of what capitalism did to the family are, by both writers, couched in language which to many people today would appear to be that of male chauvinism. "In many cases the family is not wholly dissolved by the employment of the wife, but turned upside down. The wife supports the family, the husband sits at home, tends the children, sweeps the room and cooks. . . . It is easy to imagine the wrath aroused among the working-men by this reversal of all relations within the family. . . . Can anyone imagine a more insane state of things? . . . (it) unsexes the man and takes from the woman all womanliness. . . ." Unmarried women, says Engels, who have worked from the age of eight or nine, "prove wholly inexperienced and unfit as housekeepers. They cannot knit or sew, cook or wash, are unacquainted with the most ordinary duties of a housekeeper, and when they have young children to take care of, have not the vaguest idea how to set about it."

These words, calculated to raise the hackles of the mildest feminist today, must be set in their historical context—the break-up of the old family system by the impact of large-scale industry. The implied demand for the right of the working classes to a "normal" family life ("normal" in the sense of the sex roles laid down by class society for the molecular family as an economic unit) is undoubtedly correct in that historical situation, since any other demand would have been impossibly unrealistic. (One might perhaps analogise the Chartist demand for universal *male* suffrage. Also, a more modern analogy: the recent demand by black South African women for the right to family life which has been broken up by apartheid.)

The Working Class Family

In fact, the working class has achieved its demand for a family life, and although this has accentuated the sex-roles and therefore the oppression of women in the family, it must be considered as a substantial advance from the Marx-Engels period. The bourgeois family has not changed to any great extent during the development of capitalism, being still influenced by economic and property considerations, but the working-class family has changed a great deal—in some ways for the better and in some ways for the worse.

It has changed for the better because of the improvement in the status of women and the fight for women's equality. Women now have political equality and legal near-equality (even if only on paper); they have vastly increased opportunity for higher education (relative to the period we have been considering). They have entered social production in greatly increased numbers (there are now nine million at work, one-third of the labour force) and over an increased range of jobs; they have the possibility of fertility control, which has enabled them to contribute a longer period of their lives to work outside the home. These factors, plus the ideological struggle around women's status, have created a much more free and equal partnership between husband and wife and a more equal relationship between parents and children.

It has changed for the worse, I believe, in the conditioning and thinking about women's status. It may seem odd to say this when a century ago women struggling for the most elementary rights were regarded as unsexed viragoes and when today discussion about equality is open and widespread; but I believe the conditioning has, so to speak, been driven underground and is therefore even more difficult to combat. Moreover, it is reinforced day in, day out by the barrage of mass media propaganda which presents women only in the context of kitchen and bedroom; this is a phenomenon of our own age which has created a much more subtle form of acceptance of the roles traditionally ascribed to women than the more open acceptance of the Victorians.

The improvements in women's status have also had the effect of contributing to a greater consciousness of the oppression suffered by women within the molecular family. At a time when no woman had political, legal or economic rights, when there was a total lack of equality, oppression within the family was submerged in the general oppression. Today, however, with the gains in status which have been won, inequality is more obvious for the women within the family.

The remaining legal inequalities, for example—

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income tax, guardianship of children—affect wives; so do the non-legal but customary requirements for a husband's consent to H.P., tenancy, passport, hysterectomy, I.U.C.D., etc. Wives are even more unequal than single women in respect of jobs and wages because of the demands of family responsibility. The loss of economic independence is something which cannot be over-estimated in its effects on both wife and husband, creating superiority/inferiority feelings and often consequent resentment. Cut off from the world of work, with 24-hour-a-day responsibility for the overall running of the home and family, without opportunity to use whatever education or training has been acquired, inferiority is accentuated and further resentments created.

Changes in Family Situation

Changes in the family situation have altered not only the family itself, but also the situation of women within it, sometimes for the worse. The family is smaller, not just in numbers of offspring: grandparents and other close relatives are less readily available for support, either for geographical reasons or because more women are working up to retiring age. It is more isolated, because families tend to move further and more frequently; because of population growth and pressure on housing, which have broken up former neighbourhood relationships; because of the ideology of a property-owning democracy which shuts families into little boxes; because child-care facilities have actually declined in quantity over the past couple of generations. When the molecular family of parents and children moved out of the communal kin group in pre-history, it became more vulnerable; the smaller it becomes, the more vulnerable it is to social and economic pressures.

The one factor which remains constant in the whole situation is class society itself, in which women have always been and will continue to be doubly oppressed. Even with the changes in the family which have taken place under capitalism, capitalism itself is the constant factor, which is responsible for attack on the family and the break-up of the family—in its early days through working conditions, today by its attacks on health, child-care facilities, the home, prices, rents and family living standards in general. Capitalism dehumanises all human relationships, and because of the nature of class society and private property vested in male supremacy, the dehumanisation is at its worst in man-woman relationships. But it is a tribute to family structure that, despite all this and even under capitalism, the family remains, at worst, some sort of bulwark to cling to, at best, a source of support and security, warmth and happiness. The qualities of strong feeling, of love and tenderness which the majority of us experience within the family, are evidence that the tensions associated with the family are a product of the social structure and not based on the natures of men and women.

The Family and Socialism

To say this is not to imply that under a different social structure the family will remain unchanged, but to say what form such changes will take is difficult. On this point Marx and Engels wisely refused to commit themselves! ("That will be settled after a new generation has grown up. . . . They will establish their own practice and their own public opinion, conformable therewith, on the practice of each individual—and that's the end of it.") What we may legitimately do, however, if we agree that the form of the family and family life arises out of the structure of society, is to look at the features of the society we expect to build and draw some conclusions from that. There are two main features of Socialist society which seem to me of vital importance in their effect on the family.

One is the equality of women, particularly in the economic field. The enactment of laws on equal pay, equal education and training, equality of job opportunity, has an obvious effect on the status of all women, but will be of particular importance to wives and mothers, making it more possible for them to participate in social production at a level commensurate with their abilities and on a more equal footing with their husbands. To say this is not to minimise the difficulties involved in moving from formal equality to true equality; but when formal equality is part of the structure of society it should accelerate the process of achieving true equality, particularly if combined, as it must be, with a constant campaign of ideas (which will presumbaly have the backing of Government). In a work-based society, the valuation put on work is crucial; when women's contribution is valued at something like its true worth, then the whole valuation of women by society begins to change more rapidly.

Women in advanced capitalist countries such as Britain should, in fact, be able to move towards true equality more rapidly than women in the present Socialist countries have done, since we do not have to drag ourselves up from a near-feudal situation and much of the formal groundwork has been laid; moreover, the distinction between formal and true equality is much more widely recognised today than a generation ago, which is a considerable step towards solving the problem.

The other feature is that of the extension of the family through the social services. Many of the tensions of present-day family life arise from the necessity for 24-hour-a-day responsibility for home and children, most of which is borne by the wife and mother—though it should be pointed out that under capitalism fathers are often deprived of family life,

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and that even when they wish to share in the rearing of children they are often unable to do so because of working hours, travelling, etc. When there is a network of facilities providing for every need (day nurseries, nursery schools, after-school centres and school holiday facilities) much of the pressure on the individual family and particularly on the mother is relieved. Nor is child-care the only social service relevant to the family situation. Even the childless woman suffers from the relentless day in, day out responsibility for planning meals, shopping, cooking and housework which falls mainly to her lot. A very large part of this could be entirely abolished by the provision of family restaurants and take-away food shops, cleaning and laundry services, and the utilisation of scientific resources to provide more home machinery, disposable textiles, etc.

These questions are very relevant to the status of women within the family, freeing her to contribute to society in the political, economic or social sphere. Within the structure of capitalism, male supremacist ideology has to be fought at all levels, including within the family so that a more equal sharing of chores and responsibilities is achieved. But the true freedom of the family and its members cannot be achieved on an individual basis, because the basic question involved—the freeing of the family, particularly the woman, from the major chores and responsibilities—are not private questions but dependent on the organisation of society. In Engels' words, "private housekeeping is transformed into a social industry. The care and education of the children becomes a public affair." This will undoubtedly transform the situation of the family and its members; whether it will radically change the form of the family is a matter for discussion.

The Centre of Oppression

Here it seems important to me to clarify our views on one very vital point. It is not the molecular family which is the centre of women's oppression, it is the molecular family *as an economic unit in class society*. The distinction is crucial. Engels wrote that the emancipation of women demands "that the quality possessed by the individual family of being the economic unit of society be abolished", not that the individual family be abolished—again a vital distinction. This has important repercussions on our tactical demands: campaigning on nurseries and nursery schools, education, housing, welfare, equal pay, etc., is in fact equivalent to attacking the nature of the family as an economic unit because it implies the extension of the family and challenges the structure of society. Whether this is termed in popular language, or thought of as, "defending the family" seems to me comparatively unimportant, although at this particular historical moment I think it important to defend what the working class has gained in terms of family life structure. But the effect is what really matters; and the effect is a revolutionary demand, a challenge to class society and the relationship of the family to the means of production.

The change in society which will come with Socialism will not change the fact that the family will still be the basic economic unit (at least, at first), and therefore it seems to me unlikely that the form of the family will change. There will, however, be new problems arising, and because the family is still the economic unit, some of the problems of capitalism will remain. At the International Seminar on Family Research held in Moscow earlier this year, the Soviet sociologist Dr. L. Gordon pointed out quite frankly that political and economic emancipation of Soviet women has resulted in the "double burden". The abrupt change from "full equality and freedom in youth", said Dr. Gordon's paper, to the double burden of mature years produced an especially painful "inequality after equality". It was this sharp increase of the daily load which accounted, among other factors, for the decrease of the birth rate, he said. This problem is also causing some concern in other Socialist countries and is bound to arise here. Fortunately, there does not seem to be any tendency to solve this problem by "liberating" women from work, which would obviously intensify inequality. There is, however, in some Socialist countries, a regrettable tendency to solve the problem by limiting women's rights to contraception and abortion; happily, in other Socialist countries more positive measures are being taken such as the extension of nurseries and nursery schools, paid services to lighten household work, rent and tax reductions for families, etc.

The Family of the Future

What will happen to the family later, as part of the transition to Communism, when the family is no longer the basic economic unit? Here I am not prepared to rush in where Marx and Engels feared to tread. One interesting question does come to mind. Though the attacks made by Marx and Engels on the family were made on the bourgeois family, not on the working-class family, and though the working-class has been much freer to form its family groups than the bourgeoisie, still, while the family remains the economic unit, the element of economic bargaining plays a large part in the formation of the family: the male gives economic support in exchange for the creation of a home, the female gives her domestic labour in exchange for economic security for herself and her children. When, during the transition from Socialism to Communism, the family begins to cease to be the economic unit and the "bargain element" therefore ceases to operate, what effect will this have on the

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simple molecular family? Women get the worst of the bargain at the moment; but can we envisage the other factors which will be involved when we reach that future situation—the deeper pleasure of individual sex-love based on equality, the creative joy of bringing up a new generation of socially-conscious children to the age of self-reliance?

"It is just as stupid to regard the Christo-Teutonic form of the family as absolute, as it is to take the same view of the classical Roman form, or of the classical Greek form, or of the Oriental form. . . . It is plain, moreover, that the composition of the combined labour personnel out of individuals of both sexes and various ages—although in its spontaneously developed and brutal capitalist form (wherein the worker exists for the process of production instead of the process of production existing for the worker) it is a pestilential source of corruption and slavery—under suitable conditions cannot fail to be transformed into a source of human progress". (*Capital*). I have given Marx the last word; it is, of course, by no means the final word, as I hope further discussion will show.

(We would welcome discussion contributions on this article of up to 2,000 words in length).

The Importance of People as Compared with Machines

Martin Milligan *

(Author's Note. *In May of this year, under the auspices of the Institute of Philosophy of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, an international Marxist symposium was held over five days near Varna in Bulgaria on the subject of "Science, Technology and Man". This is also to be the subject of the Fifteenth World Congress of Philosophy, a major conference of professional philosophers of all views from all over the world to be held at Varna in September of next year. The Symposium, in which Marxist philosophers from nine European socialist and capitalist countries participated, was in fact intended to help Marxists prepare for the World Congress.*

I had the honour of attending this symposium on behalf of the British Communist Party, and what follows is, with some minor, clarificatory amendments, the text of my contribution to the discussion.

The reference at the beginning of my paper is to some remarks in the theme-paper for the symposium, submitted on behalf of the Bulgarian delegation by Academician Todor Pavlov. In the opening of his paper Professor Pavlov, whilst speaking of a "brilliant future" for cybernetics, argued that computers cannot do anything of value without people to control them, since they have no creativity, no creative consciousness or creative human personality, and asserted that men are much more important than machines. He also questioned the possibility of ever creating a "thinking computer" on the ground that human beings are the products, the social *products, of a long process of evolution.*

Later in my paper reference is also made to the idea which was expressed by some speakers at the symposium that in the sphere of ideological struggle, as distinct from the sphere of inter-state relations, there can be no compromises, and that the forthcoming World Congress of Philosophy will be an occasion for the waging of this struggle between Marxists and non-Marxists—the question being, it was said, simply "Who will win?")

I want to take as my starting-point the remark in Professor Todor Pavlov's paper that people are much more important than machines. This is surely right, and expresses something very fundamental in Marxism and indeed in the outlook of wide masses of people stretching far beyond the ranks of Marxists and Communists.

But what makes people more important than machines? I do not think this can be because machines need men to control and service them; for there are already in existence, I understand, automatic factories which need very little supervision or maintenance, and in any case it seems possible that eventually there will be very large complexes of machines which are self-regulating and self-maintaining.

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The Special Value of People

Nor does it seem to me that the special value of

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people is constituted by the fact that they are social products, the outcome of a long process of evolution. After all, harmful and valueless things, as well as valuable things, are social products; and natural substances which are the outcome of a long evolution are not necessarily superior on that account to their manufactured equivalents. Furthermore, could it not be said that machines too are social products, and that any value which attaches to people simply because of the long evolutionary process which has produced them must attach equally to the products of men, and especially to things such as machines which men have been able to produce only after a long process of social evolution?

Is it then men's "creativity", their "creative consciousness", which makes them more valuable than machines? This suggestion of Professor Pavlov's seems to me right in principle, but left by itself, without development, it is too vague or ambiguous to be wholly satisfactory. After all, machines too in at least one sense of the word are "creative"—namely, in the sense that their functioning often results in the coming into being of things or states of affairs new to the given situation. With the advent of computers, some machines may also be "creative" in another sense—namely, in the sense of being able to produce (and not merely through mal-functioning) unenvisaged new *types* of things—things with quite new qualities or combinations of qualities. If it is said (against the "creativity" of machines) that machines themselves have to be produced and supplied with raw materials —well, that is true of men too. Yet the possession of creativity of the kinds mentioned does not make us value machines as we value people.

A Different Level of Value

So again: What does make men more valuable than machines? Or rather, to put the question more precisely perhaps, what is it that puts men on a quite different, and higher, *level* of value, so that although some men are more valuable from certain points of view than others, and some machines more valuable than other machines, yet the least clever or competent of human beings is *incomparably* more valuable in our eyes, more important, more to be cherished and respected, than the most expensive of computers?

Commonsense would say that it is because men can feel and think and make decisions, and machines cannot, that we value men differently. As so often, commonsense here expresses essential truth, I think, but as so often, inadequately. In this short paper I have to leave aside the enormously important question of "feeling". But with regard to thinking and choosing: is it so certain, it can be asked, that machines cannot do these things? For instance, a gunlaying computer—to take an example which has already made its appearance in English philosophical literature—performs operations indistinguishable from those performed by an artillery officer who calculates the distance of a moving target, decides on the best angle at which to set the gun and on the best moment for firing, and gives the order which causes the gun to be fired. Since the performance of these operations on the part of the gunnery officer would be granted by anyone to be examples of thinking and deciding, why not grant that the computer too is thinking and deciding?

Dialectical Thinking

I can see no reason for denying that computers are capable of a *limited kind* of thinking and choosing. But what we must say, I believe, is that no machine of any kind is or ever will be capable of *fully dialectical thinking*, or therefore of manifesting *will* in the proper sense of the word. This is not an empirical truth about machines: it is a conceptual point. It is part of the common notion of a "machine" that any thinking it is capable of should be in major respects undialectical, so that if anything should ever be produced by men which *is* capable of fully-dialectical thinking and of action in the light of such thinking, then, even if this thing were to be made of metals and wire, this would not be a "machine" as we understand the term. What is more, and more to the point—for this is not merely or basically a question of terminology—we should have to value this "thing" (which would really not be a "thing") very differently from the way we value machines and more as we value people. (I say "more as" rather than "just as", because, unless we had reason to believe that such a "thing" also possessed a capacity for "feeling", we still should not value it as highly, I think, as we do human beings.)

But what, then, is meant by "fully dialectical thinking". More than it is possible or necessary to indicate here, but the feature of it most relevant to the question before us can be brought out by noticing one major reason why a present-day computer, even when operating with "feed-back", cannot be said to be capable of fully dialectical thinking. That reason is this: that although such a computer can within limits criticise and correct its own performance of a task, it necessarily takes its governing goals or operational rules as given, as uncriticisable.

In Constant Process

Now there are of course psychological and ethical theories which hold that human beings too, at least when they are functioning "normally" or "properly", take certain "ends" or "rules" or "patterns of life" as given, like "programmes". But Marxists, amongst others, can recognise the falsity of such theories.

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For we know that a man, for instance, can begin adult life with only the objective of winning for himself and his family a modestly comfortable living, but that through his experience, say, as a worker in a capitalist factory, he can develop in such a way that his main objective becomes the improvement of the standard of living of not only his own family but of his fellow trade unionists; that with still further development his supreme regulative end in life may become the emancipation of the whole working-class and of humanity generally; and that even when he becomes a communist, whilst he may henceforth be able to formulate this supreme regulative principle without further alteration as "shortening and lessening the birth-pangs of communism", nevertheless, in so far as he is truly alive and therefore still in process of development as a human being, his conception of what this means both with reference to the state of affairs to be worked for and as a behaviour-governing principle will also continue to be in constant process of further development.

Needless to say, not all human beings *are* in fact in constant process of moral development, but it is the Marxist, and I should say the "human" conception, shared very widely throughout the world by many sorts of people, of what it is to be a "normal human being" that he or she should always be *capable* of, and in some degree *liable* to, such development—development, that is to say, not merely in appreciation of what is required for the achievement of specific given ends, but in appreciation of what it is appropriate to treat as ends.

Moral Development

The capacity for moral development in this sense involves being able to reject established or proposed "goals" as well as "routes", and thus a capacity for *radical* criticism which machines, by definition and as things belonging to a lower level of value, do not possess.

The converse of all this is that for Marxists, as for many other people all over the world, *dehumanisation* consists in the process of destroying in some measure the capacity in people for radical criticism and therefore for moral development, and thus of turning human beings into machines or something less.

Such processes are all too much in evidence in the world today. All forms of servile labour, including wage-slavery, since they all involve the attempt to use men as machines, have some tendency to dehumanise people. In the history of the working-class movement this tendency has been countered by the struggles of the working people themselves, by their self-organisation, and by the transmission and development of human, class, and socialist consciousness.

Today the struggle to realise and preserve the essential human capacity for criticism and self-criticism is especially intense.

On the one hand, an important aspect of the "technological revolution" has enormously increased the capacity of economically and politically powerful people to hypnotise and "brain-wash" very large numbers through the monotonous repetition on radio, TV, the press, advertising hoardings, etc., of very limited ideas, or of matter with virtually no ideational content but a mere mind-paralysing force. Horrifying *physical* processes of "brain-washing", too, have now come to be practised on considerable numbers of individuals in many parts of the world. In the western world, again, there has recently been a massive increase in the pressures on young people to use actual drugs (and compared with these *physical* opiates, it must be said that some religious teaching is of positive human value). All this on the one hand, and accompanying it, year after year of the most barbarous wars, waged by the leading capitalist powers in such a manner that the savage, indiscriminate destruction of millions of individuals has been effected by the development and application of the most advanced and ingenious technology —a bitter, blasphemous mockery of human achievement which has probably done most of all to wither the love of knowledge and the joy in life of large numbers of young people in many countries, and thus to sap the very roots of human moral (and also aesthetic) development.

On the other hand, however, it is also true to say that independent-mindedness, and democratic, revolutionary and socialist consciousness are more widespread in the world today than ever before.

Battle for Human Consciousness

The fact is that throughout the world a battle is being fought for human consciousness. An absolutely indispensable, vital part of this battle is the fight to get Marxist, Communist ideas more widely and deeply understood and accepted. But this is not the whole of the battle. As in the time when György Dimitrov sent out the great call for unity in the face of something which threatened not only socialism but everything that liberal and progressive humanity valued, so today there is a need for a new united effort, differing in form from that of the "thirties, but again with the aim politically of achieving and preserving world peace, and ideologically of isolating and defeating those forces which threaten to wither distinctive human consciousness itself—that dictinctive, value-bestowing capacity of man to think critically, or dialectically, and to withhold himself from whatever cannot stand up to his critical scrutiny.

From this point of view, events like the Fifteenth

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World Congress of Philosophy take on a significance additional to that of providing an opportunity for gaining some ground for Marxism. This is not a question of "compromises". We can and should openly recognise and argue out differences with people who disagree with us. But where we have some common ground with those who on many matters are our opponents, and where we see this common ground in danger of being undermined, we should be willing to join with them in defending it, and even urge them to join with us in its defence.

Freedom and Necessity

As an addendum I should like to add some remarks about freedom and necessity.

I have argued that part of what puts men on a different level of value from that of machines is the radical character of their capacity for criticism and self-criticism, involving an ability to say "No" to any goal proposed to them or previously accepted by them. An existentialist line of thought has concluded from this that men always diminish themselves by committing themselves seriously to any one given goal or line of action. The mistake in this view was clearly exposed by Hegel for one, e.g. in the early paragraphs of his *Philosophy of Right*. That mistake is to fail to recognise that inaction on the part of human beings is itself a definite choice, and one which, unlike positive practical action which tests and contributes to the development of ideas, itself breeds *incapacity to choose*, to say "No" to inaction itself and to negativeness.

With regard to existentialism: it may seem that I have simply been echoing existentialist slogans in pointing out that part of what gives man his distinctive value is his "freedom", in the sense of a radical capacity to choose. I do indeed think that existentialists are right in so far as this is what they are saying, though of course this thought did not originate with them but was central to the whole tradition of classical German philosophy and has been inherited by Marxism, together with much else that was good in that tradition.

Moral Development

What *must* be contested in existentialism is the representation of man's value-bestowing freedom as *arbitrariness*. For when freedom is represented as manifested essentially in gratuitous acts and attributed in this sense to human behaviour, then human behaviour, far from being conceived as *above* the level of machine-behaviour, is being presented as on the level of a *faulty* machine. A capricious abandonment of an objective or a principle of behaviour is what we see perfectly exemplified in a computer gone wrong, broken down—"a machine with a screw loose". Behaviour of this sort is of course *below* the level of that of machines which are functioning properly, regularly.

What is *above* that level, I have argued, is not capricious behaviour, but behaviour which shows a capacity for development (which is of course a capacity for change, but not of *mere* change) in the appreciation on the part of the agent of what should serve as ends or governing principles of his behaviour.

Can we say anything more about what constitutes "development" in this respect?

I think Marxism already contains clues as to what more can be said on this, and that one of these is to be found by giving attention to the Marxist concept of freedom and its relation to necessity. I cannot enter into this within the limits of this paper, but I should like to make this preliminary remark.

People who wish to be considered as Marxists often present Marx' and Engels' conception of the relation of freedom and necessity one-sidedly, stressing that for Marx and Engels human freedom consists in the appreciation of necessity in the sense that man can only exercise control over his environment by knowing the laws which govern this environment. This certainly is one aspect of the Marxist view of the matter, but we should bear in mind that Engels opens his discussion of this topic in *Anti-Dühring* with the remark that Hegel was the first to deal with this question correctly.

Now for Hegel the unity of freedom and necessity lies not only in the mastery of *external* necessity which knowledge gives but also in the fact that for mind, i.e. for man, *freedom* itself is the highest necessity. We should think about this in relation to what Marx says about the "inevitability" of communism, and look again at the end of Volume III of *Capital* where Marx speaks of the rational mastery of nature as indeed a kind of freedom, but goes on to indicate that freedom in the fullest sense of the term, which can only expand into a full "realm" under communism, consists for man in human activity undertaken not as a means to an end but as an end in itself.

As I have said, this does not directly answer the question about what constitutes moral development in human consciousness about behaviour, but I think it gives a clue to the proper Marxist treatment of this question.

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The Crisis of Man and Environment

Richard Hayter and John Cox

Concluding Contribution to the Discussion

Since our original article appeared in September 1971 *Marxism Today* has received five contributions, all of which have been published. In formulating this concluding contribution we also have taken into account a score or more articles in *Comment*, the *Morning Star* and the Communist Party's *Science Bulletin* and the response to many public meetings held during the last year in which Marxists have expressed distinctive views on this topic. In view of all this we cannot accept the criticisms that discussion has been muted: on the other hand, it is fair to complain that there is little evidence of practical campaigning arising as a result.

Most contributors have been critical of the apparent slowness of Marxists in recognising the seriousness of the crisis and have suggested—as did our original article—that Communists have been preoccupied with more immediate issues and have neglected these longer-term issues. Some have suggested that the Communist Party fears that "the workers" might not understand the issues and it is this that inhibits us from making forthright denunciations of anti-social projects such as Concorde. Whilst it is difficult to prove or disprove such assertions, there can be no doubt that subjective inhibitions of this nature *ought not* to determine Communist policies and that analogies made with anti-social armament projects are valid.

The Silent Majority

The near-unanimity of the contributors in drawing attention to the seriousness of the problems needs to be treated with caution. Quite naturally, most contributors—like ourselves—will write because they are worried at the present situation and feel that the response of the Communist Party and the Labour Movement to environmental issues is inadequate The "silent majority" of Marxists who have not participated in the discussion probably do not feel as concerned as the contributors and this undoubtedly accounts for the relative lack of pollution/environmental campaigning already noted.

The surest way to stimulate the "silent majority" into realising the importance of these questions is to involve them in *activity* on specific issues. Dave Waddington's contribution was by far the most useful in this respect.

In many localities Communists participate in campaigns on environmental issues and it may well be that these will be more effective than articles in *Marxism Today* in convincing the "silent majority" of the relevance of the discussion—especially when certain articles, notably that by Comrade Jacoby, are merely regurgitations of the oft-repeated (and often discredited) prophesies of environmental doom. For this purpose, however, a simple but indispensable theoretical base would seem to be mandatory for Communists.

Questions of Principle

So long as Dialectical Materialism is accepted as the philosophical basis of the Party, this involves acceptance and active application of the following principles:

(1) The principle that man is *part* of nature;

(2) That nature is *one* system, functioning dialectically;

(3) That the control of nature, which man on this planet has now irrevocably assumed, can only be successfully exercised by knowing and correctly applying the *existing* laws of nature.

Since all man's productive processes profoundly impinge upon nature, it follows that the political decisions which govern those processes must accord with the above principles and great attention needs to be paid to them in Inner-Party education in the future. Greater theoretical clarity in these spheres cannot but lead to a greater sense of urgency in getting into active campaigning, and a greater clarity in formulating particular policies. (As an aside it is noteworthy that the environmental debate is having an effect upon State educational curricula and that the rising generation could well end up with a reasonable grounding in dialectical thinking).

The Closing Circle

By far the most useful of the popular books on this topic to appear since September 1971 has been *The Closing Circle* by Barry Commoner. Although

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written by a non-Marxist it repays careful study by readers of *Marxism Today* as in several respects it goes deeper into the thorniest issues than our own discussion. One of his most important arguments is summarised below, since it also covers points made in several contributions to *Marxism Today*.

Commoner investigates the causes of pollution in order to determine the relative importance of population and increased "affluence" (note below on GNP) compared with changes in production processes and commodities. He concludes that the contribution of the first two factors to the environmental crisis is very small by comparison with the technological factors.

For example, for thousands of years mankind has used natural oils for washing. These soaps are part of a natural life-cycle and are broken down by naturally-occurring biological degradation. The change from soaps to synthetic detergents (these are chemicals which stand apart from all existing life cycles) is a major source of present-day pollution, whilst having doubtful economic advantages for the consumer. Indeed, although the detergent manufacturer may produce detergents more cheaply than soaps, the community as a whole has to pay more overall because of the undesirable after-effects and side-effects of detergent manufacture and use.

If Commoner's argument is correct then we do not have to pose the question of a future drop in standard of living or even a moratorium on technological innovations (except possibly in regard to the problem of non-renewable resources dealt with later). It would be technologically feasible to return to non-polluting "natural" products—soaps, cotton, wool, rubber, cellulose, etc.—with little or no consequential drop in living standards *but this requires a change in the motivation for economic activity*.

(A word of caution is needed at this point since many well-meaning "eco-activists" have drawn the conclusion that *all* non-natural, synthetic, materials should be abandoned. But there is little evidence of nylon in nylon shirts or PVC in PVC weatherproofing causing a pollution problem and these two synthetic materials have been very beneficial to mankind. What is needed is a more balanced view of the advantages and disadvantages of each material *in relation to its use and disposal*. The problem is that the manufacturers of nylon, PVC and other synthetic materials are seeking always to expand their markets *irrespective of the social consequences*).

Commoner does not claim that all pollution can be ended merely by reverting to the earlier "natural" commodities. But he does show convincingly that much of the misuse of the newer synthetic materials is encouraged by the laws of the "private enterprise" (capitalist) economies and that the pressures for their introduction are (or at least should be) less strong in a socialist economy (because the social system should encourage an assessment of the overall social costs before a new product is manufactured).

The GNP Myth

The waste of resources and manpower in the production of useless commodities is another aspect explored by many writers. Of the "high priests" of the ecology movement Commoner is alone in pointing to this as a *basic inevitable feature* of capitalism whilst the others, riding on the crest of the financial returns from their well-paid prophesies of doom, offer no challenge to the ideology of the existing social system. Helen Brown's contribution was valuable in pointing to the misuse, misunderstandings and distortions of the meanings of the crucial terms, "work" and "standard of living".

The concept of "work" now is generally understood to refer to "activity that is paid" irrespective of whether the activity is socially useful or not. (As a corollary, unpaid activity—however socially desirable—is not "work"; an ideological misunderstanding which underlies many arguments of women's lib.). Thus the elimination of socially undesirable activities is feared because of the loss of "work" whilst the genuine loss is "income"—a quite separate issue.

Of even greater significance is the myth that the "standard of living" is related to the Gross National Product (GNP). As a result, an increase of GNP is equated with "economic progress", "improved living standards" and a host of other ill-defined indicators of the human condition. In reality GNP is simply a measure of the monetary volume of economic activity: it does not distinguish between efficient and inefficient production or between useful and useless commodities. Nor does the GNP index allow for the distribution of wealth within a population: by this measure the people of Kuwait and Oman have higher living standards than people in Britain and France!

But GNP is a reasonably valid indicator of the health of a *capitalist* economy since capitalism needs continuous capital expansion to survive—irrespective of the social desirability of the goods it produces. For example, car manufacturers do all they can to accelerate the turnover of their products; the standard of living then is equated to the speed at which cars, refrigerators . . . are *replaced* (note, not necessarily how many are *owned*). This increases the GNP whereas the production of better, longer-lasting commodities eventually would arrest GNP growth by causing market saturation.

This use of GNP or turnover or sales of particular commodities as a measure of living standards can become ludicrous. A journalist of *Le Monde* has equated the standard of living to the use of disposable

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plastic wrappings and complained that East Berliners do not benefit from this advantage of civilisation! Many measures to clean up the environment will lead to a slowing of GNP growth, but *this need give us no fear for our standard of living*. On the contrary, any rational measure of living standards would include an indicator of the quality of the surrounding environment.

Resources and Population

The loss of non-renewable resources (coal, oil, etc.,) is probably the most intractable aspect of the environmental crisis. With careful husbandry, improved technology, socialism *and* good sense, mankind should be able to reduce pollution to reasonable levels. But, in the meantime, vast resources of non-renewable fuels and other resources are being squandered. Jim Horth is right to point to the shortage of *time* to change the social system in order to halt these trends. For this reason alone it seems inadmissible to defer any longer taking a stand on the closely related question of population control.

Although there is room for scientific dispute about the optimum population level and also whether Britain or any other country is over or under populated, there is no doubt that an optimum population level *does exist*. It follows that we cannot afford to *wait* for the scientific community to resolve this dispute because *time* is against us. For this reason, whilst rejecting the reactionary and sometimes racialist arguments often employed in support of a policy for population control, we should not be afraid to support population control as *one* of the essential measures needed for mankind to live in permanent harmony with nature.

Time gives urgency to the struggle to achieve a socialist society which is essential for mankind to solve the environmental crisis. Yet we have noted already that preoccupation with the immediate struggle for socialism has led to communists undervaluing these issues. Moreover, the character of the coverage given by the mass media to the ecological debates has tended to divert attention away from the basic issues. (One only has to recall the widespread attention given to the irrelevant dispute between the irrational prophets of doom (Ehrlich *et al*) versus the irrational optimists (Maddox *et al*), and to compare this with the virtual silence that greeted *The Closing Circle*, to realise that the mass media appreciates the potential political significance of the ecological movement.

Campaigning Approaches

The *role of man as the determining force* is played down by the mass media as they churn out "can't stop progress", "no longer economic", etc., to cover up the inability of capitalism to satisfy human needs. We need to take up these issues alongside rents, wages, peace and other traditional campaigning issues to expose the basic inadequacies of capitalism. No doubt we shall return again and again to the theoretical implications of the environmental crisis but, hopefully, this will take place in future against a backdrop of greater activity in defence of our environment throughout the world. In our original article we outlined eight proposals as the basis for a communist environmental policy. These, we still feel, can act as a guide for such activity. In the light of the immediate political situation one might point to two campaigning approaches which need to be adopted urgently.

Opportunities are increasing for getting joint discussions at local and national level between the conservation societies and the trade union movement on issues such as Public Transport on which joint action should be realisable, especially now with the Railwaymen's Unions.

The environmental movement is at present particularly weak in the whole sphere of nuclear weaponry and testing, ecological warfare in Vietnam, and the immense waste of material and research resources now devoted to military purposes. To lead it into joint action with CND and the peace movement is a realisable aim.

These, and an immense variety of other environmental issues, are forcing themselves more and more to the forefront of political life. The opportunities are there. The need now is to step up the activities to match them.

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Thoughts on the *Grundrisse*

G. A. Cohen

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"Marx's Grundrisse". Selected and translated by David McLellan. 156 pp. Macmillan. £2.50.

1. During several months spanning 1857 and 1858 Karl Marx compiled a massive set of notes, committing to paper his current thoughts and theories about political economy and about the wider questions to which he made political economy relevant. The resulting manuscript abounds in obscurity and brilliance. Logical sequence is frequently sacrificed to the sequence of ideas as they occurred in Marx's mind while he was writing. Long extracts from other authors recurrently interrupt the development of his own views, which proceeds not in one language but in a German spiced with words and phrases from about five other languages, notably English and French. The whole is a witness to Marx's formidable genius and learning, and also to his monumental untidiness. The task of turning the manuscript into a book would require immense editorial skill and energy.

But it has been done. The transformation was performed between 1939 and 1941 in Moscow, by the Foreign Languages Publishing House. The book was entitled *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ekonomie* (*Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy*) and was 1,102 pages long. Some 35 of these were written in August 1857, and intended as an Introduction to Marx's *Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* which he published, with no introduction, in 1859. Kautsky presented the Introduction in the journal *Die Neue Zeit* in 1903, and it appeared in N. I. Stone's American translation of the *Contribution*, which followed in 1904.

The Second World War defeated the first attempt to make the *Grundrisse* public. The second, by the Dietz Verlag of Berlin (DDR) in 1953, was successful. The work now ran to 980 pages. An Italian edition appeared in 1956, and a French edition in 1967-8. A full English translation is in preparation, as part of the comprehensive Collected Works of Marx and Engels, projected by Lawrence and Wishart. In 1964 the latter house produced a translation of 38 consecutive pages of the Berlin edition, under the title, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*.[1]

[1] The translation was by Jack Cohen, and Eric Hobsbawm provided a masterful introduction. Hobsbawm emphasised the importance of the *Grundrisse*, four years earlier than Martin Nicolaus, who receives undeserved and unsolicited credit in this regard from David McLellan on p. 3 of the work here reviewed.

The Macmillan Edition

2. The work under review provides the Introduction once again, followed by 21 excerpts, which cover about 84 previously untranslated pages of the Berlin text. McLellan's selection furnishes the English reader with an excellent *preview* of the *Grundrisse's* riches. Nothing less, and nothing more.

The strictly aperitival character of the offering is not reflected in its title. It is called *Marx's Grundrisse*. Anyone familiar with normal publishing procedure and with the *Grundrisse* would conclude from the book's cover and its slender girth that it is an essay *about* the *Grundrisse*, by David McLellan. Anyone familiar with normal publishing procedure only might conclude that the *Grundrisse* is a short work. Both familiarities, together with the facts of the case, inspire a charge of misleading practice against Messrs. Macmillan. This charge is now widely made on the intellectual Left.

The first sentence of the inside blurb reveals that the book supplies selections only. But it proclaims that "this is the first edition in English of substantial extracts from the *Grundrisse*". But no extract here presented is as substantial as that provided by Lawrence & Wishart in 1964. The truth is that 84 more *Grundrisse* pages have now been added to the 68 which were already available.

I shall express disagreement with McLellan's conception of the place of the *Grundrisse* in the Marxian corpus. Of his new translations I have nothing but admiration. They achieve clarity, literalness, and fidelity to Marx. His translation of the Introduction, however, follows Stone's, as he acknowledges. Stone's was a very bad translation, and McLellan has not changed it much. The FLPH has just produced a new elegant English translation of the 1859 *Contribution*. It is best to read the Introduction it contains, and to ignore pp. 16-46 of the McLellan volume. (pp. 1-16 are McLellan's own introduction, and pp. 47-150 are the newly translated texts.)

The Status of the Grundrisse

3. Publications of works by Marx have political as well as intellectual repercussions; rather, their intellectual repercussions are partly political in motivation and outcome. Debates about "what Marx really meant" reflect and affect disputes about current problems and struggles. In the 1930's revisionist social democrats greeted with elation

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the publication of Marx's *Manuscripts* of 1844. They claim that the "true Marx" was now available to the public. According to them, he was a Marx more concerned with the alienation of man in general than with the oppression of the industrial working class, and the remedy for social conflict and distress was not intransigent class war but a reformist humanisation of social relations. In the late 1950's and 1960's the same *Manuscripts* played a role in the process of de-Stalinisation in Eastern Europe.

Clamorous argument, which still rages, followed the publication of the *Manuscripts*. Some contrasted the humanistic Young Marx with the Marx of *Capital*[2], who was perceived as unattractively deterministic. Others saw the difference as between a quasi-idealist philosophic youth and a scientific maturity. Still others perceived the phases of Marx's thought as inseparable and complementary. Among them some read the *Manuscripts* as preliminary gropings towards *Capital*, which remained their reference-point; but most who held the unified view of Marx thought the early work already contained the essential doctrine.

Now the *Grundrisse* appears, an intermediary between the early writings and the late, at least as regards the date of its production. Existing exegetical camps will contest its status, and different political morals will be drawn. McLellan is convinced that it is the most important work in the Marxian corpus. He also thinks it fits together well with the early writings, and, because it also resembles *Capital*, proves the continuity of Marx's thought, with its essential grounding in the early work.

I personally range myself with those who contrast the early and the late Marx, and I think the Marx of *Capital* is the Marx of revolutionary and scientific importance. I cannot argue the case here. I shall state my point of view summarily and dogmatically.

A Bridge

Marx's early work explores and extends Hegelian and Feuerbachian ideas which belonged to the intellectual environment of his youth. The content of the work centres on a philosophical conception of man, as an essentially creative nature-transforming social being, who suffers alienation when his own nature is negated by capitalist private property. *Capital* is a work of objective social science, servicing revolution by exposing the anatomy of capitalist relations of production. The theoretical structure it develops lacks and does not need the support of a philosophy of man. *This does not mean that Marx completely rejected the philosophy, or that traces of his allegiance to it cannot be found in "Capital".* It means that the theoretical content of *Capital* is independent of it. And that truth is not refuted by demonstrations that the mature Marx still cared about man and had views of human nature. Of course he did, but such considerations are irrelevant to the issue.

In the *Grundrisse* the mature Marx is borne. But the young Marx is also present in its pages. While most of the manuscript harmonises better with the later writings, there are distinct and important echoes of the earlier. The young and the old Marx are different, but they are phases of one intellectual life, and the *Grundrisse* bridges them. But a bridge does not fill a gulf. It links its opposite sides.

The extent of similarity between the *Grundrisse* and *Capital*, and the extent to which, on so many issues, *Capital* says more clearly and instructively what the *Grundrisse* is trying to say, are now little realised, because the tradition of reading *Capital* was weakened by the impact of the early writings.[3] A conventionalised view of *Capital* came to prevail, and people lost contact with its richness and detail. So now ideas in the *Grundrisse* are discovered and admired which were already available, often in clearer form, but in a neglected place.

In his Introduction to the *Contribution* Marx declared that the anatomy of man is the key to the anatomy of the ape. The more developed form is the proper point of departure for understanding the lesser. In my opinion this principle may be adopted as a guide to the study of the *Grundrisse*. The *Grundrisse* are notes on which Marx drew when he composed *Capital*. In them he mined the ore he used in Capital to erect a *theoretical* structure. The best approach to the *Grundrisse* is through a prior reading of *Capital*.[4]

One can accept McLellan's description of the *Grundrisse* as the "centrepiece" (p. 3) of Marx's corpus, but only in the sense that it is the middle of his theoretical journey. The destination, *Capital*, shows where he was going. When the dust settles—it will not settle soon—*Capital* will recapture its rightful pre-eminence.

Alienation in the "Grundrisse"

4. I concede that some important *Grundrisse* themes are not represented in *Capital*. But I do not accept McLellan's contention (see pp. 8ff) that the *Grundrisse* is Marx's theoretical contribution in its

[2] When I mention *Capital* in this review I always mean it to include the *Theories of Surplus Value*, sometimes known as Volume IV of *Capital*.

[3] *One* reason why many people prefer the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of* 1844 to *Capital* is that *Capital* is about thirty times as long as the *Manuscripts*.

[4] For example. On p. 78 McLellan describes a discussion of capital as a productive process as "obscure", and he is right. The obscurity is relieved by reading *Capital*, in particular Part II of Volume I and Chapters I and II of Volume II.

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fullest form. In his introduction McLellan conducts an ingenuous argument in favour of the thesis that *Capital* concerns only the first of six topics which Marx had intended to cover in his economic treatise: ". . . capital, landed property, wage-labour; state, foreign trade, world market". The conclusion of the argument is wrong. *Capital* deals extensively with the first *three* of the topics listed.[5] And the *Grundrisse* includes discussions of the significance of economic development for general historical development which *Capital* does not resume, but this does not show that it approximates more closely than does *Capital* to a presentation of Marx's whole political economy.

I believe that McLellan has overemphasised both the novelty of the *Grundrisse* and its kinship with the writings of Marx's youth. One way in which he does both is by exaggerating the importance of alienation in the *Grundrisse*.

The exaggeration is partly a product of a systematic tendency to assimilate the concepts alienated labour (*entfremdete Arbeit*) and alien labour (*fremde Arbeit*). Labour is *alienated* when by performing it the agent dehumanises himself. Labour is *alien*—so Marx uses the term "*fremde*"—when it is not self-employed. In his early writings Marx argues that alien labour is of necessity alienated labour. It does not follow that whenever he subsequently, as in the *Grundrisse*, discussed alien or hired labour, he was also occupied with the complex phenomenon of alienation. Only by illicitly counting alien as alienated labour is McLellan able to list a very sizeable number of pages next to the word "alienation" in his index. I do not deny that the idea of alienation occurs in the *Grundrisse*. I claim that the degree to which it is present is grossly overestimated.[6]

Achieving Socialism

5. Throughout Marx's mature systematic work there is both a deep pessimism and a deep optimism with respect to the prospects of achieving socialism. Both attitudes derive from his theorem that *abundance is a necessary and sufficient condition of a successful socialist revolution*. Abundance is here understood as a level of technological attainment at which it is possible to reduce toil (the working-day) radically while satisfying the historically developed human needs. To believe this condition is necessary for socialism is to be pessimistic about heroic attempts to inaugurate it in circumstances of relative scarcity and industrial immaturity. But Marx's complementary thesis, that abundance is sufficient for socialism, is optimistic, because he thought the industrial progress impelled by capitalist profit-seeking would inevitably lead to the required abundance.

This theorem was available to Marxists before the *Grundrisse* appeared. In the *Grundrisse* its optimistic side receives a new and exciting philosophical elaboration. We are introduced to the idea of a nature so transformed by science and industry that the line between technology and nature is no longer discernible:

> The worker no longer inserts transformed natural objects[7] between the material and himself; he now inserts the natural process that he has transformed into an industrial one between himself and inorganic nature, over which he has achieved mastery. He is no longer the principal agent of the production process: he exists alongside it. (p. 142).

Men no longer work *on* nature. That struggle, with the social class divisions it has entailed, is over: there is no exploitation of labour because there is no longer any labour to be exploited. Nature has been transformed into a system, requiring supervision only, and which by its own action produces the environment and the objects men need. Men do not apply tools to nature, but regulate a new industrialised nature with which tools have been integrated. The ravages of class society give way to freedom in an industrial Eden.

The theorem here elaborated poses a serious intellectual and practical challenge to the socialist movements of the Third World. For it seems to rule that attempts to establish socialism in societies bereft of advanced technology are bound to fail. *Yet the fact that Marx believed deeply in the theorem is not a proof that it is true*. Southern-hemispheric socialism is particularly well-suited to contribute a disciplined discussion of the limits on its truth.

There is also a practical challenge, because there is at least some truth in Marx's pessimism. It is imperative, while honestly accepting what is true in it, to defeat facile reactionary inferences that will be drawn from it, favouring an indefinite postponement of revolution. The battle against imperialism must not be arrested by the fact that hopes about what an anti-imperialist revolution can achieve in conditions of scarcity should be modest. To discover and practice the right policy is a difficult task. It is not an impossible one.

[5] With the second in Volumes III and IV, with the third largely in Volume I, but also elsewhere.

[6] The overestimation manifests itself in the titles of and introductions to some of the excerpts. Selection 3 is called "Money as a Symbol of Alienation in Capitalist Society", of the alienation, presumably, of man. But in Marx's discussion money does not *symbolise* alienation, but *is* an alienated form, not of man but of exchange-value: it is "the exchange-value of commodities, severed from them and having its own objectified existence" (p. 60). The alienation of man is a secondary concern of the inquiry. There is, moreover, nothing in section 3, or in sections 4 and 13, which is not treated in similar terms in *Capital*, and with little implication that the alienation of man is centrally at stake.

[7] i.e. tools, machines.

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London Millwrights and the Combination Acts

Ruth and Edmund Frow

Trades Unions, in the twentieth century, have developed into a mighty force; a force so powerful that the Trades Union Congress is prepared to advocate non-co-operation with an Act of Parliament, the Industrial Relations Act. The nineteenth century was heralded with similar attempts to throttle the barely formed trades combinations. It may be significant that the engineers of the time, the millwrights, were apparently able to circumvent the Combination Acts and continue to function as a trade union even as early as 1807.

The eighteenth century drew to a close with the echoes of the French Revolution mingled with the ever increasing sounds of industrial processes. To those in power at the time, it must have appeared as a highly unstable situation and one pregnant with undesirable possibilities. They evinced manifestations of fear and apprehension in much of their conduct and legislation. The aura of suspicion and alarm amounting to phobia can be traced through the use of spies and agents to combat the activity of the workers during the first two decades of the new century. An obvious target for repressive measures was the proclivity of working men to combine together to protect their interests and raise their wages. The last year of the century and the first year of the new one were marked by the enactment of legislation which specifically forbade the formation of any form of trade union or club which had the intention of using the combined power of the workers to dictate terms to the masters.

Wilberforce

The excuse for passing the Combination Acts was provided by the master Millwrights. In 1799 they were so concerned at the growing strength of the men's societies that they petitioned Parliament to sanction the fixing of wages by a Justice of the Peace and to suppress combinations among the men. The Bill was introduced by Sir John William Anderson, Member of Parliament for the City of London. The Bill, which dealt only with journeymen millwrights, reached the House of Lords. But it was abandoned in favour of much wider legislation dealing with all trades. This was sponsored by William Wilberforce.

Wilberforce might be characterised as the Mrs. Mary Whitehouse of his day. He appointed himself as custodian of the morals of the poor and during the 20 years from 1790 to 1810 he let no opportunity slip of pointing out to them, "that their more lowly path has been allotted them by the hand of God; that it is their part faithfully to discharge its duties and contentedly to bear its inconveniences,"[1] He set up a Society for the Suppression of Vice and among the evidence of moral degradation which he saw among the poor was the growing habit of combination to enforce standards of living above their station in life. He was moved to take action to secure the end of slavery in America, but was not able to see that the workers of the industrial revolution were equally in need to end their thraldom. So he saw no contradiction in his conduct when he sponsored the Combination Act which was finally passed on July 9, 1799.

The journeymen millwrights were, of course, included in the wider provisions of the amended Act. A further Act passed in 1800 made the position quite clear. Any contract which had the intention of raising wages, lessening the hours of work, decreasing the quality of work or any proposed interference with what today would be called managerial functions, was illegal and punishable. Moreover, any meeting called to discuss such matters was illegal. The only form of workers' organisation which was acceptable by law was the Friendly Society, which under the terms of an Act in 1793 encouraged artisans to unite in mutual support to avoid becoming a charge upon the rates in time of sickness. By this Act, a registered Friendly Society had protection for its funds and was able to sue and be sued.

The history of the 24 years during which the Combination Acts were in force, shows that many trades made no apparent effort to circumvent the provisions of the Act, but formed Friendly Societies for mutual protection. When the Act was repealed in 1824, a proliferation of local trades societies indicated that the letter of the law may have been observed but the spirit certainly had not. However, there is evidence that the highly skilled and exclusive millwrights did not even trouble to disguise the trade union character of their society.

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The Powerful Millwrights

As the nineteenth century moved into focus, the millwrights found themselves in a very powerful position. Samuel Smiles said that they were virtually the only engineers:

> "In the course of their trade they worked at the foot-lathe, the carpenter's bench, and the anvil, by turns; thus cultivating the faculties of observation and comparison, acquiring practical knowledge of the strength and qualities of materials, and dexterity in the handling of tools of many different kinds. In country places, where division of labour could not be carried so far as in the larger towns, the millwright was compelled to draw largely upon his own resources, and to devise expedients to meet pressing emergencies as they arose. Necessity thus made them dexterous, expert, and skilful in mechanical arrangements, more particularly those connected with mill-work, steam engines, pumps, cranes and such like."

He said that in the early days they were looked upon as, "a very important class of workmen". He added that, "The nature of their business tended to render them self reliant, and they prided themselves on the importance of their calling."[2] They were clearly the forbears of those whom Fergus O'Connor later called "the pompous trades and proud mechanics."[3] They were not the men to submit to repressive measures designed to prevent them from furthering the interests of their trade and their families.

Mr. Bryan Donkin, a London Engineer, told the Select Committee on Artizans and Machinery on March 20, 1824, that the Combination Acts "had no effect at all among engineers and millwrights, in restraining combinations".[4] Evidence to support that statement can be found in the Rules of the Friendly Society of Journeymen Millwrights.[5] This was a Society instituted on May 25, 1801. It met at Mr. Hallets' house, The Sign of the Britannia, in Little Britain. The revised Rules and Orders were issued in 1807. Although the Society was registered according to the 1793 Friendly Societies Act and in fact quoted sections of the Act at the end of the Rules, there are trade rules and regulations included. There were 20 rank and file members of the Society and eleven men on the Committee. The Secretary was John Chesney of Enon Chapel, North Street, Chelsea. The total membership was therefore 32.

The Trade Rules

The exclusive character of the journeymen millwrights is shown by the two guineas entrance fee and monthly contribution of three shillings. The dues covered "funeral expenses and weekly allowances to the sick". But, in addition, the members paid 6d. every monthly night, "to be spent for the good of the house". No doubt the millwrights were hard workers and hard drinkers. Until 1814, when the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers was repealed, the millwrights were able to restrict entrance to the trade and that partly accounted for the small number in the Society. There was, however more than one such Society in London because William Fairburn,[6] the celebrated engineer, applied to one which he called "The Old Society" in 1812 when he arrived in London. That Society met at East Cheapside. There was also the "New Society" and the "Independent Millwright's Society" to which he was admitted. It is possible that the Journeymen Millwrights formed in 1801 was the "New Society" to which he referred.

The trade Rules of the Journeymen Millwrights covered most of the aspects of trade union life which one expects a modern Union to undertake. Wages, which had risen from 2/6 a day prior to 1775 to 4/6 in 1799, had, by 1807, reached 6/3d. The hours of work were laid down as a daily ten hours and extra time after the first two and a half hours was to be paid at an enhanced rate. Night work and Sundays were to be paid at double time. It may have been the infrequency of night work because artificial lighting was inadequate that attracted the double time premium. Improved conditions in modern times have reduced the rate to time and a third. By the nature of their work, millwrights went out to work away from their own shop. When they did so, they were to be paid 7/3 a day and if they travelled

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to work for a "gentleman", presumably on a country estate, they were to be paid travelling expenses as well.

The strength of the millwrights' position is proved by the fact that these Rules were submitted to the Justices of the City of London and accepted by them.

Wages and Overtime

Journeymen millwrights were employed by small masters who were themselves employed by manufacturers. Apart from negotiating with their own employer, the millwrights were often able to submit a claim direct to the manufacturer over their master's head. The master millwrights were often under pressure both from below and from their employer. They were thus in a vulnerable position. No doubt Mr. Cooper, Millwright, felt that it would be wiser to comply with the request that his Foreman delivered to him in London on May 13, 1805:[7]

> Sir,
>
> The journeymen under your employment find that they have just cause of complaint arising from the great advance of every necessity of life, and that their wages are inadequate to their necessary support, without being under the necessity of working much extra time, which is the cause of many disputes, with the Gentlemen or their Clerks,— much extra time we consider a great injury to a man, ruins his constitution, requires greater support, he hath no time for improvement, destitute of reflection, and degenerating below his station in Nature, contrary to the Laws both of God and Man.—
>
> They therefore humbly request that their wage, may be advanced one shilling and ninepence p day making in the whole seven shillings p day, and they resolve to require no extra time, unless you think proper for them to do so.— Your answer stating any proposals on or before Saturday next—according to your former desire.—
>
> Yr humble servants———

The early stand taken by the millwrights against working overtime created a precedent. When the Amalgamated Society of Engineers was formed in 1852, one of its first demands was on this issue. The battle is not won even after over a hundred years of campaigning. The Manchester engineers' present ban on overtime is a further stage in the struggle.

There is no doubt that the extraordinary skill and diverse talents of the millwrights not only put them in the position of keystone to the developing engineering industry, but their form of organisation laid the basis for the different trades which separated off as the century progressed. Trades with lesser skills were harrassed by the Combination Acts. Prosecutions and imprisonments were imposed during the quarter of a century that it was on the statute book. That was certainly longer than is likely to be the fate of the current penal legislation in force against the trades unions—and it is not improbable that it will again be the engineers who will make a mockery of it.

References

[1] W. Wilberforce, *A Practical View of The Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians* (1797), pp. 405/6.

[2] Samuel Smiles, *Lives of the Engineers* (1861) Vol. 1, p. 312.

[3] Northern Star, 1839.

[4] *S.C. on Artizans and Machinery* (1824) p. 38.

[5] *Rules and Orders to be Observed by the Friendly Society of Journeymen Millwrights*, held at the House of Mr. Hallets, The Sign of The Britannia, Little Britain. Instituted May 25, in the Year of Our Lord, 1801. Altered and signed by the Committee, August 1807.
(Little Britain is a street in the City of London, off Aldergate Street, not far from the Guildhall).
These Rules are in the possession of the authors.

[6] William Pole, *The Life of Sir William Fairburn, Bart.* (1877) page 93.

[7] Manuscript letter in possession of the authors.

(continued from page 384)

For the French "popular violence" by the working class the *BRS* has the ambiguous and meaningless "organised strength".

For a strategy in a country with large repressive forces, which spells out in detail the step-by-step transition down to replacing Colonel Blimp with someone "loyal to the Socialist government", the studious and designed avoidance of the possible need for "popular violence" at any stage of the transition is the essence of the reformist character of the *BRS*.

Cul-de Sac

Recently, a comrade remarked to me that the *BRS* should have been drafted by one of our outstanding Marxists. My answer was that to detail the step-by-step revolutionary transformation now, needed not a Marxist but a fortune-teller.

How can a revolutionary spell out in detail its strategy and tactics for revolutionary change in a period when revolution is not on the agenda nor predictable when it will be. Does anyone seriously believe that when the revolutionary situation does mature that we will run to our libraries for our copies of the *BRS* to see what comes next? Are we so inept to accept that we will be boxed in by a prior strategy that may not meet the requirements of the situation? If that be so, then the *BRS* is not a strategy for revolution. It is misnamed. It is not a British Road, its a Cul-de-Sac.

(This discussion is now closed. Bert Pearce will reply early in 1973.)

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Discussion Contributions on:

Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain

Tom Wheldon

I read the article by Comrade Pearce with great interest.

Comrade Pearce rightly emphasises that socialist democracy must be an extension and an amplification of existing rights won through struggle; curtailment of these rights is unthinkable. Regretably, I feel that the measures described by Comrade Pearce, though intended to safeguard and extend existing freedoms, suffer from important shortcomings.

In "The State and Revolution", Lenin drew attention to three measures considered necessary by Marx and Engels to prevent the appearance of bureaucratic distortions within a socialist society. Briefly, these are:

(1) Elected officials should be subject to recall at all times (not only at times of election).

(2) Elected officials should be subject to criticism and supervision "by all".

(3) Elected officials should be paid no more than "workman's wages".

In Lenin's view, such measures ". . . show more clearly than anything else the turn from bourgeois to proletarian democracy. . . ." (page. 40).

I would argue that:

(1) Such measures are essential for a socialist society within which the needs of communism are developing.

(2) They are not simple. The concrete application of these theoretical precepts will require a great deal of discussion and experimentation.

(3) These measures should be clearly stated as being amongst the objectives of the Communist Party. They permit a sharp distinction to be made between the possibilities of socialist democracy and the limitations of bourgeois democracy.

(4) These points again raise the question of anti-socialist parties in a socialist society. Would such parties be required to conform to the above principles or not? If a hypothetical Tory MP is to be subjected to "instant recall", how is he to be recalled and by whom?

I do not think it logically impossible to devise mechanisms whereby instant recall and continuous mass criticism of officials could be reconciled with general elections at intervals of several years contested by anti-socialist parties, but it might be difficult. If we are serious in our intentions, such mechanisms should be spelled out—they are crucial matters, not details.

In summary, the three points mentioned are necessary for the healthy development of a socialist society advancing towards communism and a society without a state. Their application to our specific conditions would not be a simple matter and it is desirable that such questions be given attention. Finally, they assist in the differentiation of socialist democracy from social-democracy and should be utilized in our criticism of the latter.

Marshall Harris

Bert Pearce's article contributes nothing to the growing discussion in left circles on the way to advance the cause of Socialism in Britain, because it is completely lacking in a clear, theoretical class-oriented basis of analysis.

Broadly speaking, Cde. Pearce is talking about alliances and revolutionary forces, actual and potential. However, he merely identifies these by name, makes no attempt to consider the body of Marxist-Leninist theory on alliances, and makes no serious analysis of the various forces identified. Such an analysis would examine the social forces at work in Britain today, in terms of their relationships to the means of production, in the context of economic and ideological trends, and with a hard look at the changing balance of interests for and against revolutionary change within each of the strata and groupings.

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Indeed, Comrade Pearce admits his lack of method when he says that "the list is not a definition of separate class forces". It is perhaps unfair to expect Comrade Pearce to supply what is lacking in the original document from which he copiously quotes, and of which he has no more than undertaken an exposition rather than an explanation. (I refer, of course, to *The British Road to Socialism*). His article is a clear example of eclectic, pragmatic, non-Marxist "methodology", unfortunately typical of the confusion and lack of theory which has for so long been one of the major subjective factors in holding back the movement in Britain.

The Theory of Alliances

The general theory of alliances, with all its implications for the strategy and tactics of revolution, cannot be adequately discussed in one short discussion contribution. It does, however, clearly need discussion—if for no other reason than the fact that it is at best misunderstood, and at worst totally disregarded, by the new forces now emerging within the broad spectrum of the revolutionary Left and the Labour Movement. I wish only to observe some aspects of the Marxist approach to alliances in passing.

First, it is clear that, hitherto, the proletariat *required* allies in order to strengthen the revolutionary forces, neutralise opposition and isolate the main enemy. Such allies as could be won were, in the main, sections of other *classes* whose demands, in relation to the ruling class, were already *revolutionary*. Thus, in class terms, the Bolsheviks (like the Chinese Party) could ally with the poor peasants, because the *objective* needs of that section of the peasant class were in open contradiction with the needs and possibilities of Russian bourgeois and feudal society. Moreover, the revolutionary section of the peasantry actually had its own revolutionary political organisations, which, for all their waverings, utopianism, and tactical unrealism, contributed to the destruction of the bourgeois state. In successfully forging such alliances the Bolsheviks were under no illusions about the contradictions which existed between the interests of the peasantry and those of the working class, nor did they foster such illusions —not even by the default of silence. They were fully aware that as conditions would change and pressures differ, the peasants, or some of them at least, would see their own interests diverging from those of the workers. This indeed became a major problem during the years of the famine, and its aftermath is still reflected today in the continuing problems of agriculture faced in the Soviet Union.

Scientific Analysis

The point here is that Lenin did not merely list, or enlist, this or that vaguely characterised grouping or stratum as an ally, but analysed Russian society in class terms, examining closely the objective interests of classes, and groups within classes, and the contradictions between classes and between the groups of which they were composed. It is this kind of clear scientific analysis which is totally absent from Bert Pearce's article and his source, and indeed from our Party press in general.

Secondly, the question of alliances is complicated, as far as Britain is concerned, by the fact that the proletariat is the numerical majority. This lends plausibility to the concept that alliances are unnecessary, and makes possible the continued existence, as a *genuine* trend in the Movement, of political groupings who implicitly subscribe to that concept and pursue strategy and tactics consistent with it. It is for this reason that the so-called "ultra-left" cannot be ignored (as it is by Comrade Pearce) as part of the revolutionary potential in this country.

This has, of course, implications that lead us beyond abstract lists of possible allies into consideration of alliances formed in practice. For instance, when members of Black militant groups are arrested in the course of their legal militant demonstrations, often after intensive provocation by the Police, then it is the duty of all revolutionaries, of whatever tendency, and especially Communists, to give all aid and support, *and to be seen to do so*. This is a situation which is occurring more and more often, and not only among Black militants. The whole emphasis of Comrade Pearce's argument, and his passing snipe at "snipers from the ultra-left", as he put it, discourages comrades from doing that part of their duty. The trouble with what I might call "the consumers' guide to allies", the list, is that it is not only unanalysed, but becomes ossified and unable to adapt to newly emergent trends. For example, the Black militants referred to above figure nowehere in Bert Pearce's article, nor do they in the BRS. Yet they constitute a growing force within a very important and very particular section of the British working class: the Black immigrants and their British-born non-immigrant children. In the long run it will be far more fruitful to examine and analyse groupings and sections like these, in order to find ways of relating to them in the struggle for Socialism, than to propagate abstract blueprints for one and only one possible path to Socialism

Why Labour Governments Failed

Naturally, the key role in any move along the path has to be, and will be played by the organised Labour Movement with Marxist leadership. But Comrade Pearce gives the impression of wanting to avoid any critical analysis of the Labour Movement, which would enable us to strengthen our alliances and weaken the grip of social-democratic ideas and policies. He merely indicates that the Labour

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Governments have distorted basic socialist ideas, and that they did not see nationalisation as a key step to social transformation. This is really no substitute for a Marxist analysis of the reasons *why* they did not see, or why social-democracy has never succeeded (nor attempted to succeed) in bringing about a Socialist transformation of society.

One of the cornerstones of the classical Marxist critique of social-democracy was that the social-democrats' obsession with operating within the framework of bourgeois institutions, including the bourgeois democratic electoral system, and their belief in the possibility of taking over the bourgeois state structure, doomed them to become, in their turn, another bourgeois-democratic institution, to the point where they had an interest in the maintenance of such institutions. Thereby, their ability to struggle—indeed their belief in struggle—was weakened to the point of total impotence.

Institutions Absorbed

Comrade Pearce sings a paean of praise for those very institutions which are tolerated by the ruling class and have been absorbed into its system. He talks about "the long growth of capitalist democracy involving the conceding of extensive working class rights, education, trade union organisation, press and propaganda, the vote, with political parties participating in parliament and local councils . . . and scores of bodies, official and voluntary, through which the working class enters into discussion and administration of almost every field of social life". One is tempted to ask: if things are so good, why change them? True, he suggests that he is aware that they serve the ruling class as a safety valve, but he makes no attempt to examine, say, parliament, in this light. Without such an examination, his line appears so narrowly divided from that of radical social-democracy that one must seriously ask him two questions: in what way does Marxism contribute to his thesis, and what specific contribution does the Communist Party, *as distinct from* left social-democracy, make to the development of a Socialist Britain?

Reactionary Trends

Finally, what is completely lacking in Bert Pearce's resumé of the BRS is an awareness of the growing reactionary trends within the ruling class. A proper analysis of this new phenomenon might perhaps reveal that, with the decline of Imperial power and wealth, and an increasingly subordinate role in world affairs, the British ruling class has lost its ability to concede. An examination of this situation, if it is true, might throw a very interesting light on the strategies expounded by Comrade Pearce and the forces and tactics likely to emerge as necessary in the coming years.

Loizos Mihalis

I am sending you a contribution on "Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain" which arises out of a discussion in the Keele branch of the Party and in which a number of us made criticisms of the contribution by Bert Ramelson in the October issue of *Marxism Today*.

Bert Ramelson, in his reply to Bill Warren, maintains that it is shallow and superficial to argue that the failure of our Party in the electoral field is one aspect of our failure to provide determined leadership in the development of a broad popular alliance of anti-monopolist forces. On the contrary, he argues, if electoral gains are to be used as a test of a successful revolutionary strategy, then the electoral gains by Communists in France, Italy and Japan are a vindication of the correctness of the strategy developed by us in the *BRS*.

We would argue that it is incorrect to point to the relative success of a particular strategy elsewhere as a vindication for a similar strategy in Britain. Bert Ramelson's reasoning takes no account of the diverse historical experiences of the countries he uses as examples. This type of argument is particularly weak in that it fails to explain why we have not made similar gains in the electoral field.

Theoretical Basis Necessary

By equating Bill Warren's arguments with those of other "Leftist groups" critical of the *BRS*, who have failed to obtain working class support, Bert Ramelson implies that Bill Warren's arguments are therefore incorrect. This however misses the crucial point made by Bill Warren; that of the necessity to elaborate the theoretical basis of the *BRS*, examining the class structure of Britain, the nature of the British state, the nature of British Social Democracy and the changes which have taken place in the post-war capitalist economy.

Without this theoretical elaboration, the *BRS* remains, as Bill Warren says "a badly written rationalisation of an electoral shopping list."

Given that electoral success and the rapidity with which the masses accept and follow a particular strategy are not adequate tests of its correctness, our Party has still to provide an explanation of its failure at one particular level of struggle—the

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parliamentary level. Our strategy as elaborated in the *BRS* and elsewhere, is one of struggle at all levels, including parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggles.

> "The mass struggles, the growth of unity, the changes in the labour movement, must find their reflection in Parliament at every stage".
>
> "The culmination of this process would be an election of a Parliamentary majority committed to a Socialist programme. . . ." (Betty Matthews, "Britain and the Socialist Revolution", p. 17-18)

How do we account for our failure at the parliamentary level? Is it a reflection of the type of struggles we lead on the extra-parliamentary level? These questions are crucial to the future of our Party.

Bert Ramelson appears to be perplexed at Bill Warren's assertion that our Party has failed in its strategy of gaining the leadership of the working class and its allies. He points to the election of Communist militants to lay and full-time union positions, and to the rank-and-file struggles led by our Party.

"Economism"

Bill Warren however, is *not* arguing against these facts. His contention is that the struggles led by our Party are of the type characterised by Lenin as "economism". The confusion on Bert Ramelson's part seems to stem from his inability to understand this.

As Bert Ramelson points out, many of the recent economic struggles have also had a political side. This does not however, necessarily exclude them from being characterised as "economism".

As Lenin pointed out: "Trade Unionism does not exclude 'politics' altogether, as some imagine. Trade Unions have always conducted some political (but not Social Democratic) agitation and struggle".

Lenin, in *What Is To Be Done?*, was concerned to distinguish between "trade union politics", by which he meant "the common striving of all workers to secure from the government measures for alleviating the distress to which their condition gives rise, but which do not abolish that condition, i.e. which do not remove the subjection of labour to Capital",[1] which he described as the "bourgeois politics of the working class",[2] (does the UCS struggle not come under the description of trade union politics?) and Social Democratic politics, which requires the existence of an organised revolutionary party.

Bert Ramelson, in his reading of Bill Warren's article seems not to have understood this distinction.

Need for a Revolutionary Party

Bert Ramelson believes that the logic of Bill Warren's remarks—that the only changes that have taken place within the labour movement are those associated with "economism", and that they would have taken place without the leadership of our Party—implies that there is no need for an organised revolutionary party, and that Bill Warren's arguments are in line with theories of spontaneity advocated by certain ultra-left groups.

On the contrary however, the logic of Bill Warren's arguments that, (1) struggles led by our party have been largely "economist", and that (2) these struggles and "trade union politics" (i.e. bourgeois politics) can and do develop without the need for a revolutionary party, implies that our party is *not* revolutionary, what is required is a revolutionary party with a revolutionary strategy.

Bert Ramelson accuses Bill Warren of a total inability to understand the strategy of the *BRS*. This may be so. What is equally apparent however, is that Bert Ramelson has totally failed to understand Bill Warren's argument. He draws incorrect conclusions from the logic of Bill Warren's article, thereby failing to answer Bill Warren's criticisms, because he has failed to understand the nature of "economism". He appears to believe that "trade unionist" politics is synonymous with "revolutionary" politics, and that therefore the "economist" struggles led by our Party are a vindication of our "revolutionary" strategy.

We wish to make it clear that we do not necessarily accept all of Bill Warren's criticisms, but wish to make the point that Bert Ramelson has not understood them, and has therefore failed to answer them, while at the same time ignoring the necessity for the type of theoretical elaboration and analysis indicated by Bill Warren in his article.

Questions of the State

On the question of the state, Bert Ramelson gives the impression that he believes that certain institutions which form part of the bourgeois state are "neutral" institutions, which are in the hands of representatives of the bourgeoisie—once these representatives of the ruling class, the bourgeois chief constables and the bourgeois personnel of the judiciary and the army have been replaced by proletarian chief constables, judges etc., then the bourgeois state will have been smashed and replaced by a Socialist state.

> "A representative of the working class as chief constable, as well as his main colleagues coming from the same class . . . , is a smashing of the state". (*Marxism Today*, October 1972, p. 320)
>
> "Working class judges and army officers replacing the present personnel is a smashing of the state—

[1] Lenin: "What Is To Be Done?" pamphlet, p. 43.
[2] Lenin: "What Is To Be Done?" pamphlet, p. 83.

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> though the institutions of the police, judiciary and army are retained but are now instruments of the working class and their allies instead of the property owning class". (*Marxism Today*, October 1972, p. 320)

We think that Bert Ramelson's arguments are at odds with Marx and Engels when they said that; "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery, and wield it for its own purposes".

The question we wish to pose is whether a mere change of personality in the existing institutions of the bourgeois state, even on the basis of the most acute mass struggle, constitutes the smashing of the state?

Marx, in a letter to Kugelman (1871) said that the task of the proletariat was "no longer as before, to transfer the bureaucratic military from one hand to another, but smash it. . . ." Again, can this be reconciled with Bert Ramelson's arguments.

Accepted that it may be possible to utilise certain existing institutions of the state during and after a socialist revolution, we are however, concerned with the emphasis placed upon this possibility and upon the lack of recognition that the working class in its mass struggles in a revolutionary situation may create new organisations to confront and bypass the existing institutions of the bourgeois state, as a basis for future socialist control.

Parliament

In relation to Parliament, Bert Ramelson persists in giving the impression that he believes it to be a neutral institution which: "at various times in our history (it) has been used as an instrument of class power on behalf of the particular ruling class".

Bert Ramelson wants the working class to wrest control of this "instrument of class power" and to use it "as the instrument of power of the working class and its allies in a Socialist Britain".

We have seen that mass struggle led by our party and its allies has not, as yet, been reflected in the parliamentary field. No analysis has yet been made to account for this. Can we then be sure on the basis of this, that in a developing revolutionary situation Parliament will be captured by the forces of the left and that it will not be used as an instrument of class power on behalf of the ruling class to defeat the revolution?

Bert Ramelson uses the example of the change in composition of the Soviets—from a Menshevik to a Bolshevik majority—in order to prove his point of the possibility of transforming Parliament in a similar way, on the basis of mass struggle. Maybe so. We regard this however, as an incorrect use of historical analogy. The Soviets were created by the working class and the revolutionary peasantry as instruments of their class power against Czarism and the bourgeois provisional government. The Soviets can, in no way, be compared to Parliament.

In conclusion, we would like to make it clear once more, that we are not here wholly concerned with the correctness or incorrectness of Bill Warren's arguments. We are more concerned with Bert Ramelson's failure to understand them and to provide an adequate answer. The importance of Bill Warren's article lies in that he has raised a number of issues which are of crucial importance to our strategy, and that he has pointed to the necessity of serious theoretical analysis of the present conjuncture. Without this theoretical analysis, the *BRS* remains an abstract programme, unrelated to the tasks of the present historical moment.

Charlie Doyle

In his contribution in the October issue Bert Ramelson starts out by saying:

> "Bill Warren is entitled to be critical of the *British Road to Socialism*. But as a persistent critic over the years it is really high time that he confined his criticism to what is contained in the *BRS*".

I think that the above quote applies equally to Ramelson himself as well as to the opening statement by Bert Pearce. It seems to me that neither Ramelson or Pearce have dealt with the key question under discussion, i.e. the strategy of Socialist revolution in the *BRS*, particularly the section dealing with the transition to a Socialist society.

There are three theoretical propositions that present themselves in such a discussion. I will state them briefly.

1. The *inevitability of peaceful* transition by parliamentary and extra-parliamentary action to advance the revolutionary change from a capitalist to a Socialist society.
2. The *inevitability of armed struggle* to achieve this aim.
3. The *possibility* that it may be by one or the other.

It is in defence of the third proposition that I wish to argue, because the debate so far has been between those in favour of either of the first two, namely the peaceful or non-peaceful road. Worse still,

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the supporters of the *BRS* throw anyone who does not accept the formulations in the *BRS* into the camp of those who advocate the theory of armed struggle.

Defence of Democratic Rights

Bill Warren, in his contribution complains,

> "But what of the critics of the *BRS*? Are they only parrots, repeating Lenin or unable to see anything but the politics of the great crash, dogmatists, longing for the comforts and security of the past?"

Having posed the question he then falls into his own trap. He argues against:

> "This exaggerated emphasis on the struggle for the maintenance of bourgeois democracy".

He concludes his argument as follows:

> "Once we return to the Leninist concept of bourgeois democracy as the typical form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie we are in a position to expose the so-called sovereignty of parliament to discredit and defy the institutions of bourgeois rule and in so doing pave the way for the final assault on the state".

This is not merely dogmatic, but dogmatism based on a falsification of Lenin's ideas. It is apropos here to quote Lenin:

> "The left Communists have a great deal to say in praise of us Bolsheviks. One sometimes feels like telling them that it would be better if they praised us less and tried more thoroughly to understand the tactics of the Bolsheviks, to make themselves more familiar with these tactics. We took part in the elections to the Russian bourgeois parliament, the Constituent Assembly, in September-November 1917"—"both before and after the conquest of political power by the proletariat". ("*Left Wing*" *Communism*)

No one understood better then Lenin the need to defend the democratic rights of the working class in advanced societies as a necessary part of the struggle to achieve the socialist revolution.

It is quite correct when Ramelson says in answer to Warren,

> "No Marxist would, of course, consider the test of the correctness of a strategy the rapidity with which the masses accept it and follow it".

The strength of our Party or if you like the lack of it, has nothing to do with the correctness or incorrectness of formulations in the *BRS* except to the extent that they distort our priorities from time to time.

Sowing Illusions

But it is equally incorrect for both Bert Pearce and Bert Ramelson to limit their proof of the correctness of the *BRS* to the current left trends in the trade unions and the Labour Party. If it can't be proved by "the rapidity with which the masses accept it", then obviously it can't be proven by leftward trends. Ramelson shouldn't so quickly forget what he had just written. To prove the correctness of the *BRS* he produces this gem,

> "Is Bill Warren aware that the Labour Party Conference and EC, and as a consequence the Parliamentary Labour Party, has voted against the Industrial Relations Act, against the present proposals for entry to the EEC, against the Housing Finance Bill, is pledged to unconditional repeal of the Industrial Relations Act, has changed its policy on Vietnam and supported the UCS? It is far from a revolutionary position (sic) but to fail to see it as a shift to the Left and above all, the forces and the movement which brought it about, shows Bill Warren's total inability to understand the strategy of the *BRS*".

How the above proves the revolutionary strategy outlined in the *BRS* escapes me, despite the importance of what he says. It would be wrong not to see the importance of these as well as the struggles of the dustmen, miners, railwaymen, etc., as a new high, not only in militancy, but also in their political content and implications.

What has to be guarded against is overstating the case so that we sow illusions of victories not yet won. Will the Parliamentary Party, for example, repeal the Industrial Relations Act, then give us a new version of "In Place of Strife"?

The answer to that, of course, is how we develop and deepen the struggle and give it ideological content. But to do that means dispelling illusions, not sowing them. The history of the British working class movement is a history of both brutal repression by the ruling class and betrayals by right wing social democracy playing its historic role of leading the struggles of the working class into blind alleys. We can already see the elements of both taking shape if we examine less superficially the Labour and Tory Party conferences, not to mention the tripartite talks on an "Incomes Policy".

To give Bill Warren his due, he was trying to argue his case from more basic fundamental positions. He was entitled to be answered in kind and not by such an obvious harangue.

Aunt Sallys

It is most interesting that all of those who defend

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the *BRS* insist in one way or another that those who don't are ultra-left "dogmatists longing for the comforts of the past" and are automatically in favour of non-peaceful transition and against participation in parliamentary elections.

Bert Ramelson says:

> "Then there is his (Bill Warren's) criticism that it is wrong in an advanced country to lay too much stress on the fight for democracy and the importance of Parliament as the "highest form of representative power".
>
> "This is really the 'Achilles Heel' of the critics of the *BRS*. It is their failure to understand the nature of democracy" etc. etc.

This, of course, is rubbish as not all opponents of *BRS* hold such views.

Bert Pearce quotes John Gollan to make the same point:

> "We have the ultra-left arguments which dismiss Parliament and 'traditional politics' and talk about political power without spelling out the ways, means, stages and forces for getting to political power . . .". For this the political party is the instrument with organisation, ideology and programme".[1]

Bert Pearce then says, "This puts it in a nutshell". To which one can only add "nuts" because it proves only what every Marxist knows and accepts, and proves nothing about the validity of the *BRS*.

John Gollan repeated the same type of argument in his speech at the World Communist Conference, Moscow, June 1969. Speaking of the need to struggle for a parliamentary majority pledged to Socialism, he said:

> "And if we cannot do that how are we going to carry through a socialist revolution? In some undisclosed way in defiance of the will of the mass of the people? This is how the ultra-left argue."

These are all Aunt Sally's of which Ramelson so indignantly complains. To take the extreme opposite of a proposition, knock hell out of it, doesn't prove the proposition.

> "For every truth, if exorbitant, if it is exaggerated, if it is carried beyond the limits in which it can be actually applied, can be reduced to absurdity". Lenin—"Left Wing Communism".)

[1] He should have used the proper order, ideology first, then programme, then organisation. I am not just splitting hairs. What is happening in the discussion on the *BRS* is that having adopted a programme we now try to make our ideology fit in with it.

This is what is wrong with the *BRS* and its defenders. The truth of "the possibility of a peaceful parliamentary transition to Socialism" is being exaggerated into an absurdity.

Possibilities not Certainties

It would be foolish and un-Marxian to deny the possibility, in the context of present world conditions, of a peaceful parliamentary transition. But it is equally foolish and un-Marxian to deny that it may develop in some other way, including the possibility of some non-peaceful, violent upheaval. One position is as dogmatic as the other. To pose it either/or is not dialectical and therefore not Marxist.

It is quite correct for us to make clear that we seek to achieve the Socialist revolution by peaceful means. This conforms to the best interests of the British working class and the majority of the people. And it needs saying again and again.

But we should not confuse our desire, our aims and objectives with the objective political reality and relationship of forces that may exist at the moment the revolutionary crisis matures. To detail, as the *BRS* does, the strategy and tactics for conditions which we cannot possibly foresee is the most serious error revolutionaries can make.

Bert Ramelson makes the point that the French, Italian, and Japanese parties have adopted "a similar strategy". This is simply not true. In refutation, and only as an example, let me quote the French Communist Party programme adopted at their Congress, February, 1970.

> "In conditions of our time it (The French Party) considers it *possible* (my emphasis) for the transition to Socialism in France to be effected by peaceful means . . ."
>
> "If the exploiting classes did nevertheless have recourse to violent means to keep our people from going over to Socialism, the working class would of course have no other way left but to resort in its turn to *popular violence*". (my emphasis)

The formulations in the *BRS* are quite different in substance. I quote:

> "The working class and popular movement will need to be ready to use its organised strength to prevent or defeat attempts at violence against it . . .".

Then:

> "This strength will determine whether the verdict is accepted or whether, in defence of their interests, the capitalist resist by force".

(completed on page 377)

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